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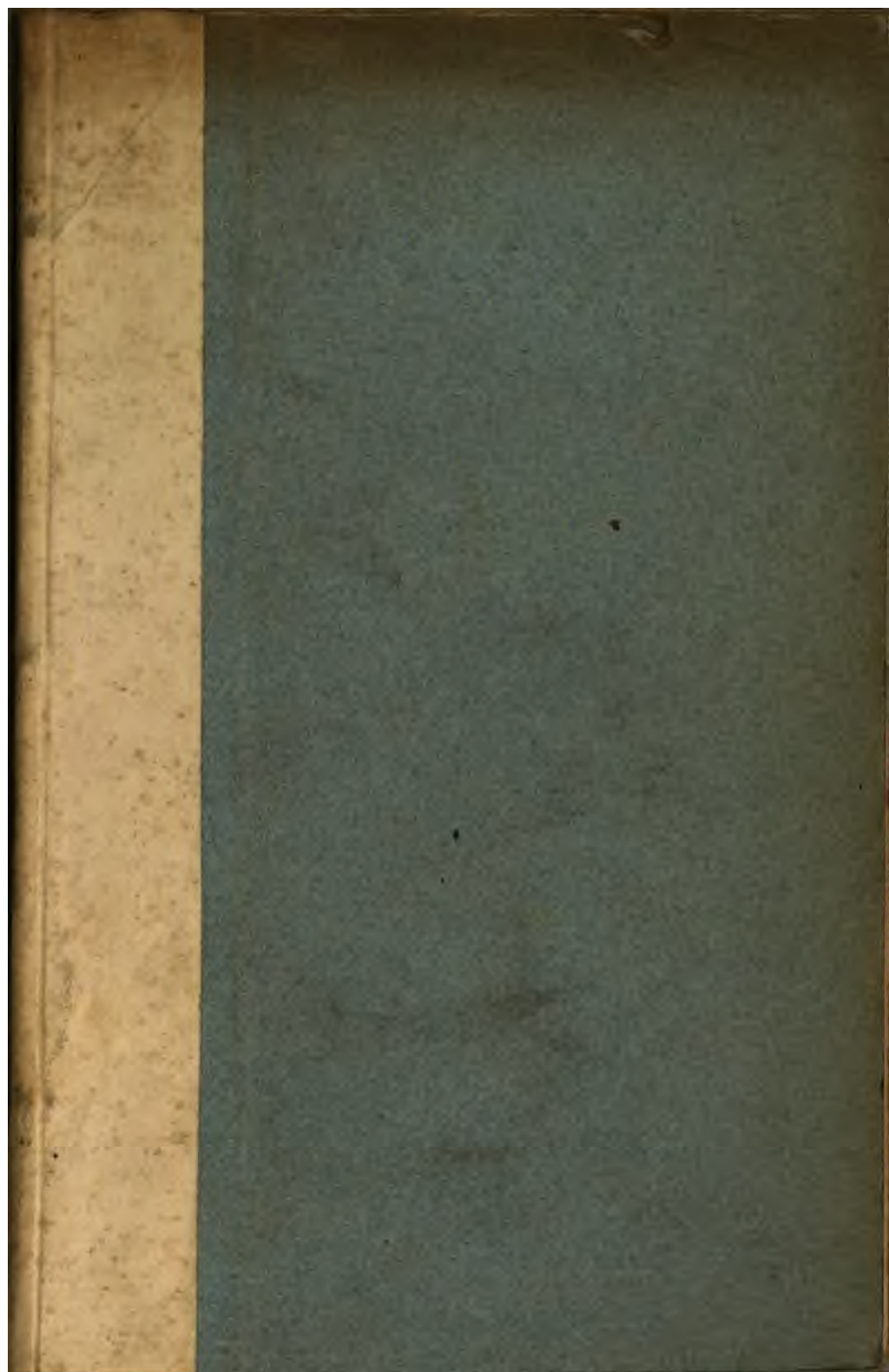
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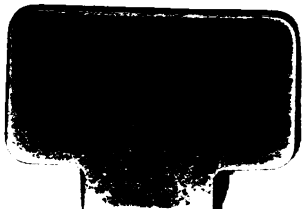
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109.
APOCALYPTIC GLIMPSES

BY

CHARLES B. WALLER, M.A.

VICAR OF WOODFORD BRIDGE, ESSEX.

AUTHOR OF "THE APOCALYPSE VIEWED UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE
UNFOLDING AGES AND THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS"

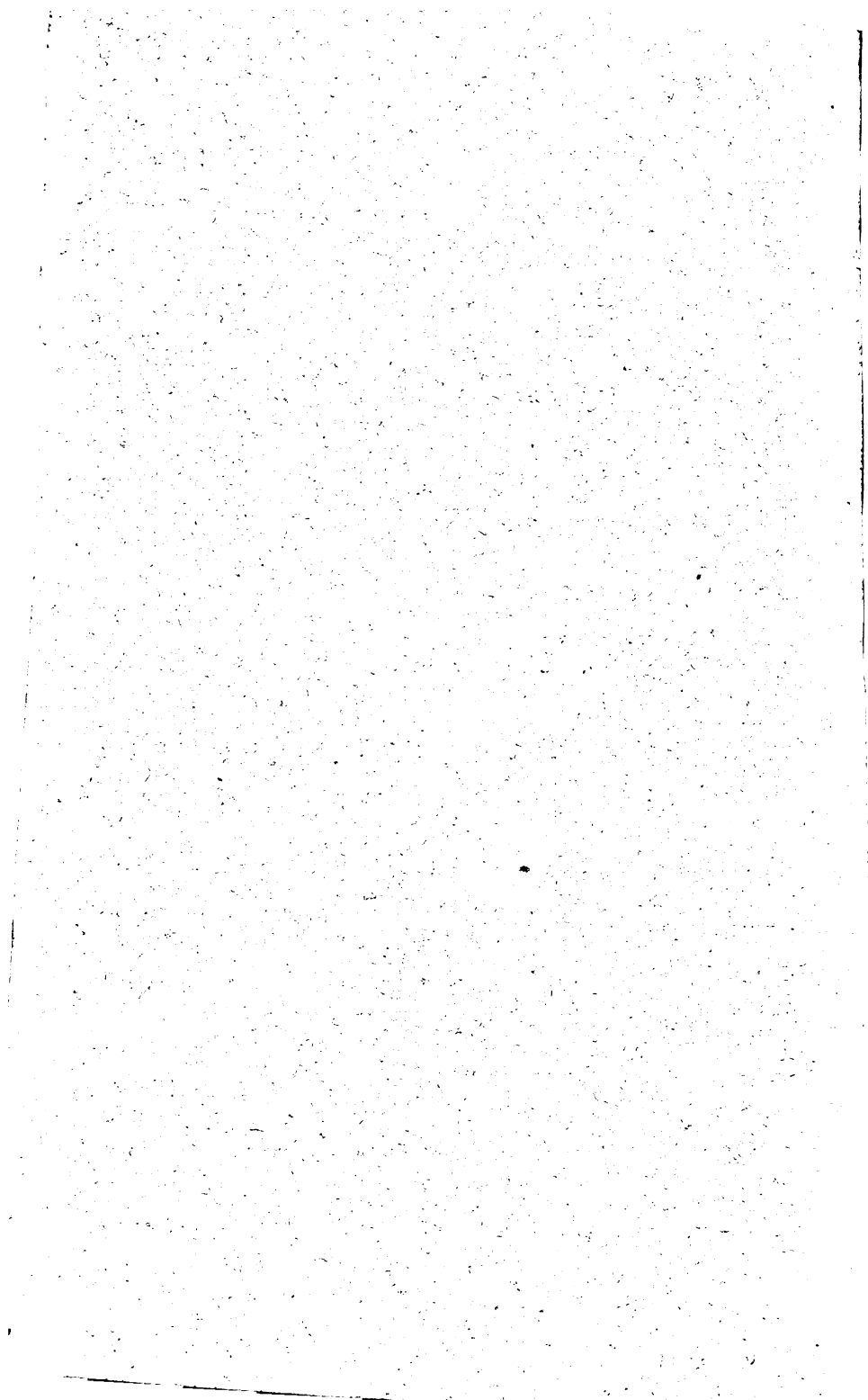
"The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."—2 COR. iii, 6

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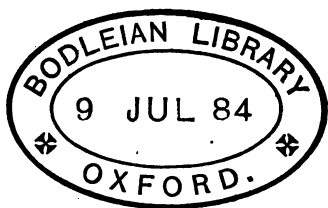
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PREFACE.

THE writer of these pages desires to address a few words to the reader, that he may set forth what appears to him to be the deep importance attaching to the study of the Apocalypse.

Perhaps no other book of the Bible has ever been so much commented upon as this ; but what has been the result of all the earnest labour bestowed, wherewith the endeavour has been made to unfold its meaning? May we not venture to assert that the book has not as yet exercised any practical influence upon the minds of the faithful in general? It has been as a book sealed. But surely God has a purpose in giving this remarkable book to His Church ; and surely at some period of the Church's experience, if not hitherto, it must be intended for the enlightenment of the understanding and for reaching, with power, to the hearts and consciences of believers.

It is the belief of the writer of this commentary that the deep spiritual significance of God's book is now being disclosed, and that, with this disclosure, comes a trumpet note from Christ to His Church. For his own part, he feels himself to be but a feeble instrument, who knows nothing of himself, but only as it has been given to him to know. And such knowledge as he has received has been vouchsafed because he has come to the study of this book in a prayerful spirit, with a mind freed from all preconceived theories and convictions, taking Scripture itself as his only guide. It has been by comparing scripture with scripture, feeling that every emblem in the sacred text was replete with significance, that light has come ; and that thus has been fulfilled the promise, "In Thy light shall we see light."

It will be seen by those who take pains to search this scripture in a teachable spirit, that there is a wondrous harmony to be evolved out of its manifold parts, that the whole of the scattered sections of the roll of the book written within and without may be so adjusted that we see unveiled the mystery of godliness—Christ manifest in the flesh—as the Redeemer and Judge of the world; and it is this wonderful harmony, and the comprehensiveness of its spreading circles of vibration, which arrests the attention and makes one feel that we are in the presence of Him “Who liveth and was dead,” and Who says, “Behold, I am alive for evermore.”

To the faithful the thought may arise, Why has Christ so long delayed to unveil this book? The answer seems to be forthcoming when we come to see what it is this book of the Apocalypse contains. And if the purport of the book be that which may now appear, then it is to show us the principles of good and evil working in the world, *especially* opening out to us whence they take their rise and what their end.

And now that the signs of the times indicate that we are drawing toward the close of this present age of the world, the wickedness prevailing is herein adumbrated and its overthrow revealed.

The same condition of things is likewise adumbrated in regard to the “age to come.”

This book of the Apocalypse is thus especially suited to the need of the Church at the present time, showing Christ’s presence amongst us. And while leading us to expect the setting in of the great apostasy, it brings comfort to all true hearts in the assurance that Christ with His “chosen and faithful” followers shall in due time triumph over all.

There is likewise that in this book of the Apocalypse which gives it a preeminence, so we judge, over all other books in the Bible. Before this book was written we were told that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God,” and “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” In respect of these scriptures thus written by holy men of God, there is the treasure of God’s truth in the “earthen vessel” of man’s expression. But there is more than this in the book of the Apocalypse; for here, in truth, we have plenary inspiration, the words are Christ’s own words as well as the truths which are clothed in them. It is emphati-

cally "the revelation of Jesus Christ." St. John fell at His feet as *dead*. He was then told to fear not, but to write the messages which were then dictated to him.

And when this book is studied, when the reader will take pains to dig for the hidden treasure, and to see how the veins of precious metal stretch far under the surface, cropping up here and there, showing themselves at wide intervals, yet withal revealing to the patient searcher that there is no break of continuity, the thought will come upon him that the book is not the product of an inspired apostle, but could only issue from Him Who is alone the source of Light ; and then follows the necessary belief that the words are the very words of Christ, Who is standing at the door of our hearts speaking to us. Hence the warning against tampering with these words—adding to them or taking from them (xxii. 18, 19).

This short commentary—Apocalyptic Glimpses—is supplemental to the author's fuller work on the Apocalypse, and is intended to give such an insight into the treatment as may awaken an interest in the general reader, and lead the student to seek a more complete knowledge of it than the limits of this shorter work admit.

The treatment in these pages is somewhat different to that of the larger work, wherein the chapters and verses in the Apocalypse have been taken in order. As, however, God's book appears to be broken up into parts, intersecting one with the other (which we may reverently believe has caused a veil to be spread over the face of its meaning, only to be drawn aside when, according to His purpose, the light should shine forth) the study of that work requires a sustained effort of attention, which only the comparative few may be able or disposed to give. But in the following pages, the endeavour has been to take some of the leading emblems, and to show at a glance how each of them may be traced in its connection throughout the Apocalyptic vision. It is as it were unraveling some threads of the warp from its surrounding woof. To master these leading ideas, to see them in their extended connection, will be of great service likewise to those who may desire to enter into the full treatment of the subject as given in the larger work. In addition to this, when the emblems could not be treated separately the endeavour has been to

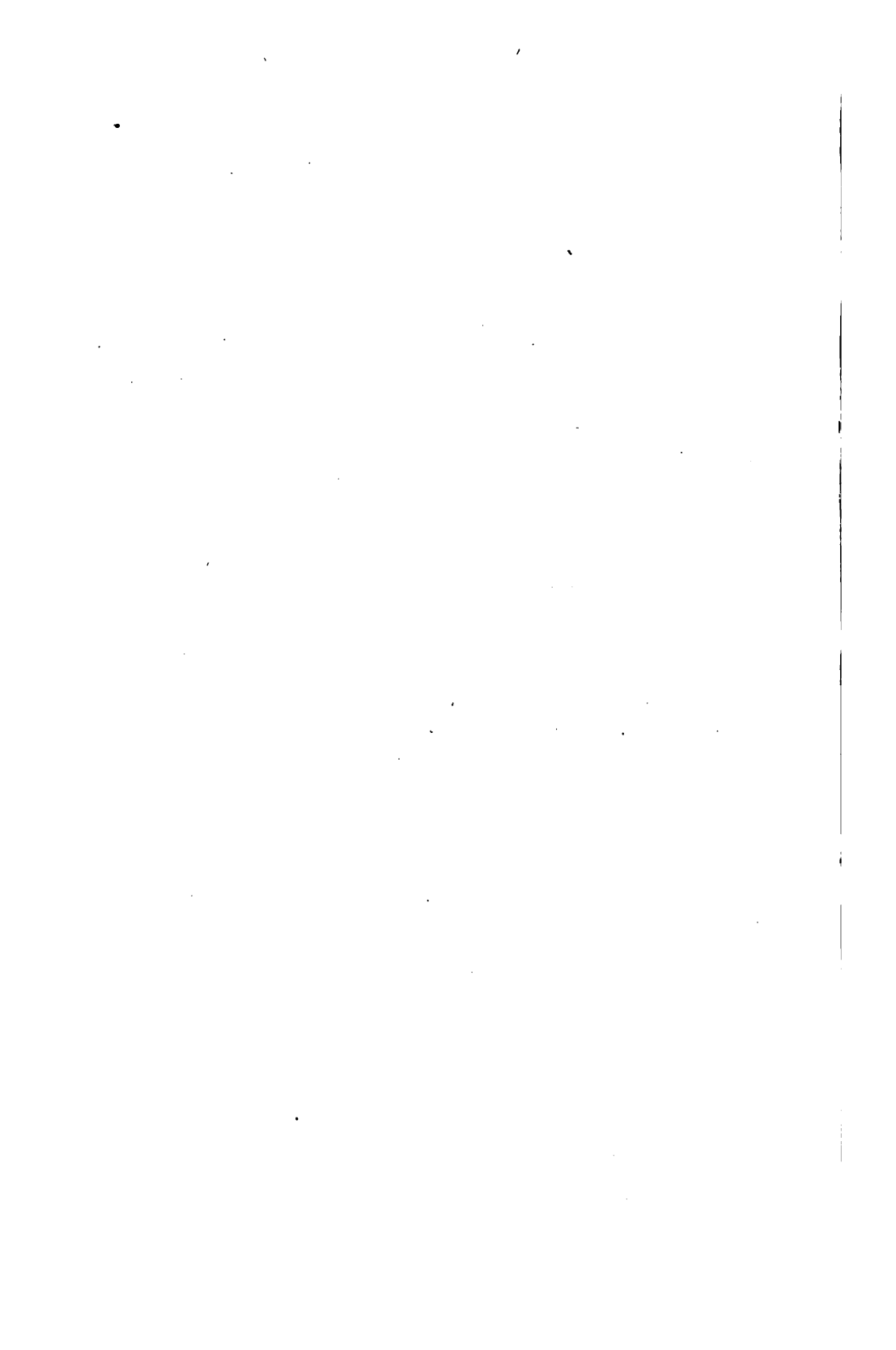
unfold the subject matter of the revelation in what appears to the writer to be the natural order.

The writer has only to repeat, in all humility and reverence, that he knows nothing of himself, but only as he has been taught. It is because of the marvellous harmony which has shone forth as the result of the treatment he has been permitted to use, that he feels a blessing has been vouchsafed to the enlightenment and comfort of his own heart ; a blessing, which he fervently prays may be bestowed upon many hearts amongst his brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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APOCALYPTIC GLIMPSES.

SECTION I.

APOCALYPTIC EMBLEMS.

1. *The Throne in Heaven.*

"AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald" (Rev. iv. 1-3). And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices" (iv. 5).

These stones, the jasper and the sardius, we divine to be emblems of God's character in His relation to men—revealing His love and justice. These stones are seen in the structure of the New Jerusalem. The first foundation stone of the city wall is jasper—the walls are jasper, and the light of the city was "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal;" whereas the sardius stone is buried up as one of the foundation stones of the city wall—"the sixth was sardius" (xxi. 20). This proportion reveals how mercy triumphs over judgment; how the throne, from which issue thunderings and lightnings, is *encircled* with the rainbow.

2. *The Four Living Creatures.*

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and

behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had the face as of a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures had each of them six wings; and they were full of eyes all around and within: and they rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, Holy Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and Which is, and Which is to come" (iv. 6-8).

We should note "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (iv. 5). And these are the seven eyes of the Lamb (v. 6), "sent forth into all the earth."

The eyes in the Lamb thus denote the Spirit of God; and the eyes in the four emblematical figures we regard as the spirits of men—before they enter into flesh.

The souls or spirits are in the midst of the throne of God, and can speak of the holiness and almightiness of God, but cannot yet give thanks for redemption, not having as yet entered into flesh. These emblematical figures have wheels touching the earth, "so high that they were dreadful" (Ezek. i. 18); and it is round these wheels that the eyes ran and returned; and "the spirit of life (Septuagint) was in the wheels," whithersoever they went thither was their spirit to go (Ezek. i. 20).

These souls thus appear to pass from the *midst* of the throne; to become incarnate, thus touching the earth; and then to return to stand in judgment *before* the throne.

Observe carefully that these four configurations of living creatures are in the vision at the end of this age, together with the twenty-four elders (xix. 4), and this because there is "an age to come" to be peopled; but when the end of the age to come arrives, and no more souls are to enter upon probation in the flesh, then the twenty-four elders are seen, but the four living creatures have faded from view, having passed from the midst of the throne to take their place before the throne in judgment (xi. 16).

As the Spirits of God are spoken of as seven lamps of fire burning before the throne (iv. 5), so these eyes in the four living creatures are spoken of as like the appearance of lamps collected together (Ezek. i. 13).

The wings on these emblematic figures indicate their flight

from heaven to earth and back again to heaven. Their diverse heads are typical figures, becoming part of the symbolic language of the Apocalypse, revealing the deep differences prevailing amongst men ; shadowing forth, likewise, different degrees of moral responsibility in those who are sent into the world to act out the mystery of godliness.

It may be allowed that the emblems of the four living creatures in Ezekiel are identical with those in the Apocalypse, being the same in essence, both being full of eyes.

But there are accidental differences :

Those in Ezekiel have each four wings ; those in the Apocalypse each six wings.

There is doubtless a significance attaching to this increase of wings in the later revelation.

It may be observed that in the Apocalypse there is a clear unfolding of the age to come, to be peopled from the reservoirs of living souls. Of this age to come, the Prophets of Israel spake (Ezek. xxxvi.-xxxix ; Isa. v. 26-30), but this truth was, as it were, folded up. The addition to the wings in the Apocalypse may indicate the unfolding which that book reveals ; and thus they seem to bear us onward through the age to come.

Again, in Ezekiel each configuration has four faces—those of the lion, the man, the calf (Sept.), and the eagle ; whereas in the Apocalypse each configuration has but one face—that of the lion, the calf, the man, or the eagle.

In the Scriptures we see clearly who are typified by the wild beast, the lion ; and who by the domestic animal, the calf. The man (*anthropos*) signifies those who have been brought into covenant relation with the Lord. The eagle represents all the nations typified by the sea. The waters were to bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life ; likewise fowl that may fly (*ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*) towards the earth, and so come into covenant relation with the “ Lord of the Earth ” (xi. 4). (Gen. i. 20 ; Rev. xix. 17.)

These emblems as seen in the Apocalypse appear to reveal the differences in character and circumstances as originally determined by the will of God. He has ordained that one shall differ from another, in order that man's probation may be wrought out. But if so, His grace breaks through these natural barriers, so that men, covenant worshippers of the

Lord—may arise out of all divisions of mankind. The Apocalypse reveals this most clearly; for there are “living souls in the sea” (xvi. 9)—souls capable of receiving the truth, when the gospel is preached to them (xiv. 6). And so it comes to pass that at the end of this age there is seen in Heaven “a great multitude, which no one could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne” (vii. 9).

What is thus revealed so plainly in the Apocalypse appears to be shadowed forth in the vision of Ezekiel; for to his view the four faces appear on each configuration, so that that of a man is seen on each. And on the one configuration in the Apocalypse, distinguished by the face of man, that in Ezekiel is seen in conjunction with man’s face, faces of the lion, the calf, and the eagle.

This seems to show us, what the Scriptures teach—that “many that are first shall be last, and the last first,” and that “many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.”

In Ezekiel the intersection of the wheels (*τροχὸς ἐν τροχῷ*), the wheel within the wheel, appears to shadow forth this truth—that “in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him” (Acts x. 26).

In restricting our view to the contrast of the two visions, that in the Apocalypse (one great purpose of which book is to show us the beginning and the end of all things in relation to men) appears to reveal the *origin* of God’s creative work—that in Ezekiel its *progress*, the unfolding of the mystery of godliness. And this seems to account for the addition of the wheels in Ezekiel’s vision, around which wheels, as appears to be intimated, it is that the eyes, the lamps, the burning coals of fire, “*ran and returned* as the appearance of a flash of lightning” (Ezek. i. 14)

3. *The Twenty-four Elders.*

“And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment (*ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς*); and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Rev. iv. 4.)

These are of those to whom it was promised, “To him

that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father upon His throne" (iii. 21). Christ had previously said, "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28).

But these twenty-four elders appear to be reigning at the time this revelation was made. That they are of the saints who "shall judge the world" (1 Cor. vi. 1) is evident, for they sing the new song, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood," "and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth" (Rev. v. 9, 10). Moreover, they have crowns of gold, are seated on thrones, and are clothed in white garments (*ἱματίοις*), which include all the specially named raiment in the Apocalypse, viz. the white robe (*στολή*), symbol of the resurrection body, for to the *souls* under the altar the white robe was given (vi. 11); also (the *βύσσινον*) the fine linen, the righteousness of the saints, the raiment of the Lamb's wife (xix. 8); "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white garments" *ἱματίοις* (iii. 5).

But if the promise to the saints is that they "shall reign"—and the time appears to be especially marked—"when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory," how comes it to pass that these twenty-four elders appear to be enthroned and reigning now?

The answer which comes to our mind is this—that these twenty-four elders represent the apostles and prophets, upon which the superstructure of the Church is raised. It is through them that the word of God comes to man, and this has a ruling force now, as well as a judgment power in the end of the age: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

These twenty-four elders are elsewhere mentioned: at the end of this age, "the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped" (Rev. xix. 4). This one age of probation having passed, at the end of the age to come, it is said the "four and twenty elders fell *upon their faces* and worshipped" (xi. 16). All probation is then over, and the light shining from their faces for the guidance of men is no longer needed, but they still have

a work to do in the New Jerusalem age, which is exclusively retributive. The judgment power is in their word, therefore they have not yet surrendered their crowns; but, at the close of that New Jerusalem age of retribution, when all enemies have been put down, and every living soul which has entered upon probation shall be in a condition "to give glory and honour and thanks" (iv. 9), "when every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father;" when the last enemy has been destroyed, and death has been swallowed up of life; then Christ Himself will deliver up the Kingdom, and His word will no longer be needed—then it is that the elders shall *cast their crowns* before the throne (iv. 10).

Consistent with this view is the fact that these elders impart comfort and knowledge to St. John: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book (v. 5); and again, to the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" it is one of the elders who said, "These are they which came out of the great tribulation" (vii. 14).

4. *The Sea of Glass like Crystal before the Throne* (iv. 6).

The beginning of things and the end of things as revealed to us—things of time, which are born out of eternity and enter again upon eternity—are of necessity mysteries to man, and can only be shadowed forth to finite understandings by symbols. "Canst thou by searching find out God? . . . It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"

As we find symbols in regard to the end of things in time, so we find symbols when the things of time take their beginning. Hence we look for symbolic writing in the earliest chapters of Genesis, as well as in the Apocalypse; and in the symbols used, there is in measure identity and close relationship.

The great proclamation made in the Book of Genesis is that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth. "God spake and they were made; He commanded and they stood forth."

But the Revelation which proclaims this sublime truth is not to teach man scientific knowledge, to unfold the processes

by which the earth and its inhabitants have come into being, but the purport of the Bible is to reveal God's presence—His power, His love, His jealousy, and His government of the world.

This is the significance, so it appears to us, of the word spoken, "Let there be light."

Man was in existence upon the earth ; the light of Heaven, however, had not shone upon his mind ; but God now takes "the Adam," and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life, so that Adam is henceforward conscious of God's presence, and is made a responsible being, placed in a paradise which he is commanded "to till"—in other words, he is called upon to exercise spiritual husbandry in God's vineyard. His responsibility is thus shadowed forth when the cattle (emblems of unspiritual human beings) are brought to him to be named, and he calls it "*a living soul*, this was the name of it" (Septuagint). (Gen. ii. 19.)

There is a great dark background of human existence ere God entered into covenant with Adam, and that is revealed under the emblem of the deep ; "darkness was upon the face of the deep," on the face of which waters "the Spirit of God moved."

It is out of this deep that the earth arises—the emblem in the Apocalypse of the region on which dwell God's *covenant* people ; on which earth it is that the sun in the firmament, the light of Christ, is to shine, as likewise the moon which reveals the covenant people of God as the Church (Gen. i. 17). And in the Apocalypse the seas, or "the isles" of the sea, are the emblems of the nations not in covenant relation with Him.

The deep on which darkness rested is to have the Spirit of God moving on it, and the light is to disperse the darkness. All moral evil is in due time to be removed, and the dark waters are to become penetrated with light.

The process undergone by the troubled sea, which casts up mire and dirt, is revealed. Such is penetrated by the judgment power of the Spirit : "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire : and them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Rev. xv. 2). This is a vision of "the lake of fire,"

"the abyss" into which the beast and the false prophet and Satan are thrown. Here is the wrath of God at work. But when all evil is purged away, and all judgment is over (for the Father, to whom the kingdom is delivered up, judgeth no one: John v. 22), then all become in due time penetrated with blessing and light; and the vision of the sea before the throne clear as crystal, on which the seven lamps of fire have been working purification, is an emblem of darkness being on the deep no longer, for all through it is transparent with light. And the seven Spirits of God in this vision of *anticipation* by which that purification has been accomplished are no longer as fire mingling with the glassy sea, but having accomplished their work are now seen apart: "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal (Rev. iv. 5, 6).

5. *The Golden Bowls, or Vials, the Saints in Embryo.*

The four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures which in their configuration as constellations in the heavens had "the likeness of man," and "the hands of man" (Ezek. i. 5-8), are said every one of them to have harps and golden bowls, which golden bowls are full of odours, the worship of the saints; and this worship thus arising as incense from the golden bowls is the *new song*, thanksgiving for redemption out of every kindred, tongue, and people and nation, and for the high reward yet to be conferred, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth" (Rev. v. 10).

These "vessels of gold" (2 Tim. ii. 20), these golden bowls, we regard as emblems of the saints. They are thus seen, as it were in embryo, to be born in due time. They derive their existence from the reservoirs of life, the four living creatures, which are not the bowls, but are as the pedestal which support the bowls, and the formation of their saintly character comes from the four and twenty elders who have begotten them as saints by the power of their word. St. Paul says, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15), and St. James (i. 18), "By His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

The four and twenty elders are the foundation of the spiritual temple into which, as it develops in growth, these saints are built as "lively stones," and of which the most highly favoured are as "pillars" (Rev. iii. 12), the whole body growing together as a habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). And this we apprehend is the temple in heaven, which at the close of this age is opened, out of which seven angels come, "having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (Rev. xv. 6). These angels are Christ's angels, the holy ones, or saints. They are not the Father's angels but the redeemed of men. Their own testimony to St. John is, "I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus" (xix. 10). The fine linen in which they are clothed is the righteousness of the Saints (xix. 8), and their golden girdle indicates their judgment power (Isa. xi. 8). They are seven in number, thus corresponding with the number of the seven horns of the Lamb, the emblem of Christ's judgment power.

Their connection with the living creatures and the golden bowl is manifested, for "one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God" (Rev. xv. 7).

6. *The Saints, who are Harpers, the "Called Chosen and Faithful" "Wife of the Lamb."*

We would now gather up the notices given of these saints of God—not the great multitude who are palm bearers, who are simply washed from their sins, and who give thanks for their salvation (vii. 9–14), but those harpers who keep the testimony of Jesus and have been faithful unto death, who receive "the crown of life" (ii. 10.) Such of these as are found on earth, while the four restraining angels (saints of Christ) are holding back the winds of coming wrath, are the 144,000 who are sealed (vii. 1–8). This is written on the inside writing of the roll. At the corresponding period in the outside writing, when "the hour of judgment is come" (xiv. 7) we see collected together and standing on Mount Zion the 144,000 having the Father's name written upon their foreheads (xiv. 1).

In regard to those who had departed this life, the first notice given is that of the souls under the altar, who were slain for the testimony which they held, to whom shining

white robes were given (Rev. vi. 9; Matt. xxvii. 52), but who were told to wait a little time for the avenging which should be accomplished. And this accomplishment is revealed, for at the outpouring of the third bowl of wrath, when the judgments at the end of this age are being poured out and the wicked on the earth have the waters turned into blood, the angel from the altar is heard crying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments" (Rev. xvi. 7). Observe it is not now the souls under the altar, but the soul clothed upon, the angel of the altar which speaks.

When on the eve of judgment the 144,000 sealed ones are seen on earth standing on Mount Zion, then St. John heard the voice of harpers in heaven, harping with their harps (xiv. 2), and they sung as it were a *new song* before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and that *new song* was, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth" (v. 10). None are privileged to sit on thrones and have judgment given unto them (xx. 4) but only those who overcome as Christ overcame (iii. 21); and this appears to be the meaning—that no one *on earth* could learn the new song, but only the 144,000 in whom is found "no guile" and who are "without fault" (xiv. 5).

These harpers hitherto heard are now seen standing on the sea as it were glass mingled with fire, the emblem of the abyss in which the beast and the false prophet are cast, having the harps of God; and they sing, not now the *new song*, but the song of Moses and of the Lamb, the song of triumph (xv. 3).

And now it is the seven angels are seen issuing forth from the temple in heaven, the bowls of wrath are given to them and the judgments are poured out. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2).

When the great struggle of Harmagedon—the emblem of the final conflict at the end of this age, between the powers of good and evil in the world—is over, when the *γέγονε*, "It is done," has been spoken (Rev. xvi. 17), when Christ is seen in triumph with the many diadems upon His head, spoils taken from the dragon (xii. 3), then the saints are seen in His triumphant train as "the armies in heaven, following upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (xix. 14).

These saints who have thus fought and conquered, to them the promise has been made, "To him that overcometh will I

grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne" (iii. 21).

And now heaven's hallelujahs are raised: "And I heard a voice as it were of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God the Almighty reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give the glory to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (xix. 6-8). The warriors on white horses clothed in the fine linen—thus become as the bride of the Lamb—are to be seated henceforward on thrones. And a vision of this is now granted to St. John, when the end of this age has come, and the dragon has been chained in the abyss for the thousand years. "And I saw thrones, and they" (the armies in heaven) "sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them" (xx. 4).

When the thousand years of refreshment to the earth are over, and Satan is again loosed, then "*the* seven angels" have trumpets which they prepare to sound (viii. 6), and judgments follow upon these trumpet sounds. As the end of the age to come draws on, toward its close a mighty struggle again prevails between the world powers and the saints of Christ—who are encamped around the beloved city—the new Jerusalem being built up upon the earth—but fire came down from God out of heaven and destroyed the enemy (xx. 9). And now the *γέγνε*, "It is done," is *again* spoken (xxi. 6), and the avenging angels are the executors of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And the devil that deceived them" (the nations) "was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast, and the false prophet" (are cast), "and shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages" (xx. 10).

And now that the great white throne has been set, and the general resurrection has taken place, and the dead have been judged, the New Jerusalem city, which has been growing up from the earth ever since the gospel was preached again in the age to come (xi. 2), when the temple was measured off, is now seen "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (xxi. 2).

Here, again, the saints who had been encamped around the beloved city while it was resting on earth, are to be dis-

tinguished as the encircling wall of this New Jerusalem city. The city itself is of pure gold, and is lighted by the light "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (xx. 11). And this light is the glory of God (xxi. 11). But the encircling wall is not gold, but jasper, which reveals the blessedness of those saints in their perfect union with Christ, Who on the throne revealed His love and mercy as jasper. And this jasper wall is reared upon twelve precious stones, which are almost identical with the stones in the breast-plate of Israel's high priest, revealing the prophets; for it was at this breast-plate, in which were the urim and thummin—the light and perfection—that council was sought; and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb being written on these twelve foundation stones (xxi. 14), we can understand how that this wall is identical with the elect body of the saints—which is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. In this foundation the first foundation stone was jasper. And Christ came as the Lion of the *tribe* of Judah (v. 5), which tribe, in going forth to battle, took the lead (Num. ii. 9).

We may now see these saints, these angels at the twelve gates, enthroned (xxi. 12) with Christ, exercising their judgment power; for "there shall in no wise enter into (that city) any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (xxi. 27).

A measurement is given of this wall of jasper. "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, measure of man (*ἀνθρώπου*), which is of angel" (xxi. 17). This number of $12 \times 12 = 144$ is used to show a complete body. The *whole* body of the saints on earth when the sealing took place was 144,000; and their whole body now in heaven, under the emblem of this jasper wall, is revealed by this numeral of the "144 cubits, measure of man—which is of angel." Does not the teaching of St. Paul (Eph. iv. 11–13, Revised Version) throw light upon this: "And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; *for the perfecting of the saints*, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the *body* of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *fullgrown man*,

unto the measure of the stature of *the fulness of Christ*." The Church of *the Elect* is the body of Christ; He is the Head, and His chosen ones the members. When this body is *perfected*, then there is the full stature of Christ; the perfect man is reached; and this man is "of angel," of Christ, "God's angel"—the angel of the Covenant (Mal. iii. 1), and this numeral of the 144 cubits signifies that this body of the saints is completed.

7. *The Palm-bearing Multitude seen in Heaven* (vii. 9-17).

As distinct from these "elect angels," these "chosen" saints of God—who are harpers, and who can sing the new song, "Thou hast made us kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth" (v. 10); who have been sealed (vii. 3) with the Father's name written in their foreheads (xiv. 1), who are clothed in the fine linen, the righteousness of the saints; and are the bride of the Lamb (xix. 8),—we find St. John speaking of a "great multitude" (ὄχλος πολλός) arrayed in white robes (resurrection bodies), with palms of rejoicing. Not a word is said of anything that they did whilst on earth, but only that they suffered. They "have come out of the great tribulation." They are not like the sealed ones, who have followed the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and who are "without guile" and "without fault" (xiv. 4-5). They have no fine linen upon them, but only the robe of the resurrection body, which has been washed from its *sins* in the blood of the Lamb.

They now cease from all suffering, and their blessedness is to be before the throne of God, and to serve Him day and night in His temple—the temple structure itself, the living stones and the pillars of it, being that temple of the Lord which is a habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22), constituting the Church of the elect.

This great multitude, with palms, sang the song of thanksgiving for salvation: "They cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 10). And this same "great multitude" (ὄχλος πολλός), on the eve of the marriage of the Lamb is heard crying "Hallelujah," and again they sing of salvation: "Salvation, and glory, and power belong to our God" (xix. 1). And again they say, "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us

give the glory unto him ; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (xix. 7).

And now *their* relationship to the Lamb and His bride is revealed by the angel: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (xix. 9).

This great multitude therefore is not the Bride, but the wedding guests ; and they are so many that no one could number them—unlike the 144,000 of the sealed ones (vii. 3) of God's elect (Matt. xxiv. 22), the "elect angels" (1 Tim. v. 21), the mighty angels (2 Thes. i. 7), the elect lady (2 John i. 1), the Lamb's wife (Rev. xix. 7), who are known by the sign of the perfect number—the 144 cubits.

It is thus seen that this great multitude have part in the first resurrection, which takes place when Christ sits on the cloud at the end of this age and reaps the harvest of the earth (xiv. 15). The shining white robe is upon them ; and they are seen before the throne of God giving thanks for salvation. And of all those, who have part in the first resurrection, it is said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (xx. 6). They are "blessed," because they have entered into rest, and "holy," because "their robe has been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb ;" it is likewise said, they shall be "priests of God and of Christ," and that because henceforward "they shall serve Him day and night in His temple" (vii. 15); moreover, it is said, they "shall reign with Him a thousand years."

It must here be borne in mind that the word "to reign" (*βασιλεύειν*) has two significations: first, to sit on a throne and reign as a king; secondly, to be of a king's party and so to reign with him. It is only to the saints that crowns, and thrones, and judgment are given ; but to these, over whom the second death hath no power—they enter into Christ's kingdom, and in this sense reign with Christ, being of the king's party.

But there is a great addition to this multitude made after the expiration of the thousand years, for then it is that those who have been shut up in Hades come forth purified. The blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, which have been shut up in

the Abyss, are not forgiven in this "age to come" when entered upon, but the "rest of the dead" are forgiven. "The rest of the dead lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished." Such have been under purification. Christ has been to them as the refiner's fire, "and He shall purge them as *gold* and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. iii. 3).

And the emblem setting forth this is given. After the half-hour's silence in heaven (the thousand years), and before the sounding of the trumpets revealing God's dealings with men in the age to come when Satan is loosed, we are told, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a *golden* censer; and there was given unto him *much incense*, that he should offer it with the worship of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the worship of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Rev. viii. 3, 4).

When the age to come is entered upon, the same conditions of experience will then prevail—men are again under probation, Satan being loosed and the grace of Christ being given. And at the end of this age to come, there will be the general resurrection; and judgment will then take place of all who have been in covenant with the Lord during that age to come, who, as saints, have not been already gathered up into the heavens. For toward the close of that age to come we read, "They (the witnesses) ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them" (xi. 12). In that general judgment all the uncovenanted peoples who have ever existed, typified by the sea will arise; for the sea then gives up the dead which are in it (xx. 13). And when the great white throne is set (xx. 11), "when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels" (the saints His bride) "with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). There will be then, indeed, a further "great multitude," to whom He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," and these righteous shall go into life eternal—they become incorporate with the new Jerusalem golden city.

The multitude of all those thus saved is great indeed. At the end of this age they were a "great multitude, which no

one could number " (Rev. vii. 9). And to what proportion has this multitude since grown? And now it is that of the new Jerusalem city a measurement is given shadowing this forth: "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city. . . . And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal"— $12 \times 12 = 144,000$ furlongs.

The contrast between the jasper wall and the golden city brings out the significance of St. Paul's teaching in regard to the *exanastasis*, the pre-eminent resurrection: "If by any means I may attain unto the pre-eminent resurrection from the dead" (Phil. iii. 11). The prize he sought to obtain was the crown. This is the "better resurrection" spoken of at (Heb. xi. 35), and the "full reward" mentioned by St. John (2 Eph. v. 8).

SECTION II.

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD"—THE LAMB IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE.

CHRIST, as the Lamb of God, redeeming the world by His blood-shedding, is the theme of chap. v. In chap. iv., as God manifesting His attributes of justice and mercy, He is seated on the throne—revealed under the emblems of the jasper and the sardius stones, and now He is seen in the midst of the throne under the emblem of the Lamb, as—

GOD INCARNATE.

And it is to Him, in this twofold manifestation of Himself, that the whole universe of responsible beings give praise and honour.

The first articulation comes from the saints (Rev. v. 8); then the encircling hosts of the Father's angels in heaven (v. 11); and then from a circle of responsible beings, wider in

its span than the multitudinous hosts of the new Jerusalem—for it has within its embrace “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea; and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (v. 13).

This vision is thus *anticipative* of the end. It is a shadowing forth to the living creatures what *shall* be. In the previous chapter it had been announced that the time should come when the living creatures “shall give glory, and honour, and thanks.” To the anticipative announcement that this shall be accomplished, the four living creatures say, “Amen” (v. 14)—“May it so happen.”

This strain of thanksgiving from all circles of created responsible beings is as the rainbow all around the throne, but proceeding out of the throne there are “lightnings and thunderings and voices” (iv. 5).

Christ has been seen as the Lamb, and now He is to be seen in the world, exercising His judgment power, as “the Word of God” (xix. 13) going forth “conquering and to conquer” (vi. 2).

Roll of the Book.

And here we have the roll of the book written within and without, the seven seals of which none but the Lion of the tribe of Judah could loose. And He, the Lamb, is seen with the emblems of His searching knowledge and judgment power, “having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth” (v. 6). “The Father hath committed all judgments unto the Son” (John v. 22). On the opening of the first seal we see Christ revealed to us as seated on a shining white horse with a crown (*στέφανος*) upon His head, and a far-reaching bow in His hand: “And he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. vi. 2).

This is the revelation now made in the roll of the book, Christ and His saints in warfare with all wickedness in the world.

The inside writing of the roll and the outside supplement each other, and it is our wisdom to discern this.

THE ROLL OF THE BOOK WRITTEN

THE AGE THAT NOW IS.

INSIDE WRITING.

Chap. vi.-viii. 1.

OUTSIDE WRITING.

Chap. xi. 19, xii.-xix.

INSIDE WRITING.		OUTSIDE WRITING.	
Chap. vi.-viii. 1.		Chap. xi. 19, xii.-xix.	
	Seven Seals.	Temple in heaven. Lightnings, voices, thunderings. Woman clothed with the sun. Christ born.	xi. 19. xii. 1. ,, 5.
vi. 2.	1 seal, white horse and rider.	Dragon.	,, 3.
,, 4.	2 ,, red horse.	Beast out of the sea (42 months).	xiii. 1.
,, 5.	3 ,, black horse.	Beast out of earth.	,, 11.
,, 8.	4 ,, pale horse, Death and Hades.	Church in wilderness (1260 days).	xii. 6.
,, 9.	5 ,, souls of martyrs.		
,, 12.	6 ,, portents of wrath in sun, moon, stars.		
vii. 3.	Saints on earth sealed, 144,000.	Saints on Mount Zion, 144,000.	xiv. 1.
,, 9.	Great multitude, <i>palm bearers</i> , seen in heaven.	Saints in heaven, <i>harpers</i> .	,, 2.
		<i>Hour of judgment come.</i> Babylon fallen.	xiv. 7. ,, 8.
vi. 14.	The heaven departed as a scroll (<i>saints gathered up</i>).	Christ on cloud. <i>Earth reaped.</i>	,, 15.
vi. 17.	Great <i>day</i> of His wrath come.	The apostasy. The 7 angels, bowls of wrath.	xvi. 1.
,, 14.	"Mountains and islands moved out of their places." The gathering of enemies at Har-magedon (xvi. 14).	1. On earth.	,, 2.
		2. On sea.	,, 3.
		3. On rivers.	,, 4.
		4. On sun.	,, 8.
		5. Seat of beast.	,, 10.
		6. Euphrates.	,, 16.
		<i>Grapes gathered.</i>	xiv. 19.
		10 horns (kings, xvii. 12), as "islands fled away."	xvi. 20.
		Beasts cast into abyss, as "mountains not found."	xix. 20. xvi. 20.
		Babylon, in remembrance.	xvi. 19.
viii. 1.	7 seal, heaven's silence begun.	7. Bowl on air.	,, 17.
		<i>γέγινε</i> , "It is done."	,, 17.

WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

THE AGE TO COME.

INSIDE WRITING.		OUTSIDE WRITING.	
Chap. viii.-xi. 18.		Chap. xx.-xxi. 6.	
viii. 1.	Silence for half hour.	The 1000 years.	xx. 2.
„ 3.	Angel with much incense, offered with prayers of saints.	Rest of the dead live again.	„ 5.
„ 5.	Voices and thunderings and lightnings (probation.)	Satan loosed to deceive.	„ 8.
	Trumpets—		
„ 7.	1, hail on earth.		
„ 8.	2, mountain in sea (Law).		
„ 10.	3, star on rivers.		
„ 12.	4, sun, moon, and stars, third part darkened.		
ix. 3.	5, locusts (beast from abyss).		
„ 16.	6, horsemen (nations from far).		
x. 1.	Mighty Angel with book open (Gospel), right foot on sea, left on earth.		
„ 6.	No more delay.		
xi. 1.	Temple of God measured off.		
„ 2.	Holy city trodden 42 months.		
„ 3.	Church of witnesses in sack-cloth, 1260 days.		
„ 7.	Beast from abyss overcomes them.	“They went up, and compassed the camp of saints and holy city.” Fire from heaven.	xx. 9.
„ 11.	Witnesses live again.		
„ 12.	And ascend to heaven.		
„ 15.	7th trumpet.	Great white throne.	„ 11.
„ 18.	Time for the dead to be judged,	Sea gave up the dead ; Death and Hades delivered up dead.	„ 13.
„ 18.	And to destroy them that destroy the earth.	The devil cast into lake, where the beast and false prophet are cast.	„ 10.
		γέγονε, “It is done.”	xxi. 6.

NEW JERUSALEM AGE.

THE AWARD OF JUDGMENT.

Sheep.

"These go into the age-lasting life," Matt. xxv. 46 ; one age of glory for the righteous.

Wicked.

"Into the fire which is age-lasting, prepared for the devil,"
Matt. xxv. 41.

This has its subdivisions, "ages of ages," Rev. xx. 10.

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The Scales.

"How much" (Rev. xviii. 7), "So much.

"Last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," 1 Cor. xv. 26.

"There shall be no more death," Rev. xxi. 4.

"Death swallowed up in victory," 1 Cor. xv. 54.

"BEHOLD

I make all things new," Rev. xxi. 5.

"Every curse shall be no longer," Rev. xxii. 3.

The Son, to whom all judgment has been committed (John v. 22),
having finished His work, will give up the kingdom to His Father.

"Then cometh the END," when

GOD

shall be all in everything, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

SECTION III.

THE AGE THAT NOW IS.

That which is now opened in Heaven is the Temple of God.

"AND there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament." The subject is Christ in covenant relation with men. While He is preparing His saints, His judgments are in the earth. "And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (xi. 19).

The Woman clothed with the Sun.

It is at this commencement of the outside writing of the roll that attention must first be given. For here, in the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, we have the elder Jewish Church; and of this woman the child is born. "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God, and to *His throne*" (xii. 5; iii. 21).

"And the woman," the Church of Christ, "fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should nourish her 1260 days." It is during this time that she is nourished from the face of the serpent (xii. 6, 14).

Christ's ministry upon earth was about the period of three years and a half = 1260 days. This may give significance to the symbolic period of time given to denote His sojourn with His Church on earth, nourishing her.

The Dragon—Beast from the Sea—Beast from the Earth.

The persecuting powers of the Church of Christ are now revealed. There is the dragon, the old serpent "which deceiveth the whole world (τὴν οἰκουμένην δλην)," who is now "cast into the earth (τὴν γῆν)" (xii. 9), the region on which dwells God's covenant people. There is the beast rising out of the sea of human existence with his seven heads and ten horns. These "seven heads are seven mountains, on which

the woman sitteth " (xvii. 9). " And the waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues " (xvii. 15). And these seven heads thus manifest as arising out of these waters indicate kingdoms. " There are seven kings " (xvii. 10), who have received power as kings (xvii. 12). Thus much is here implied, and at xix. 19 their armies are visible.

These seven heads indicating kingdoms, these seven frowning mountains which have risen up in the neighbourhood of the earth (for it was on the *sand* of the sea-shore that St. John was placed when he saw this seven-headed beast rise out of the sea : xiii. 1), we divine to be emblems of those nations and people who have come into responsible contact with the covenant people of God, and are, as it were, the territory in which the blaspheming spirit has manifested itself. These have been the Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman, Mohammedan.

There is, however, the same blaspheming spirit manifesting itself in the midst of the covenant people of God, and is the beast out of the earth. This is called the false prophet (xvi. 13 ; xix. 20 ; xx. 10). " He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon " (xiii. 11). This reveals the anti-christ, that blaspheming spirit which manifests itself in the Church of Christ.

In regard to this beast out of the earth, it is said, " Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast : for it is the number of man (*ἄνθρωπον*) ; and his number is 666 " (xiii. 18).

We would here take occasion to remark that the Greek word *anthropos* is always used in this book of the Apocalypse as the special epithet for those who have been brought into covenant relationship with the Lord as dwelling on the earth : they are either those who have continued faithful, or those backsliders who have received " the mark of the beast " (xvi. 2).

This word *anthropos*, as likewise the fact of this beast arising out of the earth, is another indication that we are to look for this wicked one as arising in the Church of Christ. Thus much seems to be revealed.

By the word *anthropos* our attention is directed toward " the man of sin " (*ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας*) of whom St.

Paul speaks (2 Thess. ii. 3). But who is this man of sin? what the significance of the number 666 given to St. John? Many guesses have been made; but the principle thus manifest, that he arises as a development within the Church of Christ, will dispose of some of those guesses, especially that which points to the Roman emperor Nero, who is really of the beast out of the sea, and not of that out of the earth. That this beast from the earth, or false prophet, is antichrist—the man of sin, “who sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth that he is God,” we think is evident. But who is the Antichrist? St. John spake of many antichrists in his day, and the same spirit has survived to our own day. But the special manifestation indicated by the numeral 666, we believe has not yet appeared, and for this reason, that that which restrained his manifestation in St. Paul’s time, still restrains. “That which letteth will let until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thess. ii. 7).

And what is this restraining influence but the presence of the faithful in Christ? So long as they remain on earth, there is salt to prevent the carcase of humanity rotting in corruption; there is light preventing the setting in of Egyptian darkness. But when “the heavens are rolled up like a scroll,” when at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. ii. 1) the elect are gathered together, when those left on the earth become the victims of the evil one—then the great apostasy sets in, and “*then* shall that wicked one be revealed” (v. 8). If any surviving on earth in those evil days have any measure of wisdom, the signature of the number 666 may then be plainly read. Until this revelation take place, it would thus appear that the mystery is beyond solution.

Christ on the Shining White Horse—The Breaking of the Seven Seals.

The breaking of the seven seals discloses the conflict of Christ and His faithful ones with these powers of evil, and their overthrow (vi.).

We now turn to the inside writing of the roll, and on the breaking of the first seal we see Christ seated on a shining white horse, with a crown (*στέφανος*) given to Him (Phil. ii. 9), and a bow (Psa. vii. 12), going forth conquering.

We regard this emblem of the horse and his rider as

revealing the composite nature of man ; the horse typifying humanity in the lower regions of the body, the rider indicating the governing principle, the reasoning power. The colour of this horse seen at the breaking of this first seal is (λευκός) shining white, and is the emblem of the *glorified* body : Christ *risen* from the dead is thus seen going forth conquering.

Behind the rider on the shining white horse are seen, as the second and third seals are broken, riders upon a red and a black horse. These are emblems of the Christian's experiences, fighting and enduring. The former has a sword, and the colour of the horse is blood-red ; such bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus : the latter reveals the wilderness-experience (Rev. xii. 14), where earthly blessings are denied and black (Lam. v. 10), hunger to be endured, but who are still nourished from the face of the serpent (Rev. xii. 14), with the "oil and wine" emblems of spiritual blessings.

The pale horse, at the breaking of the fourth seal, reveals those bearing the name of Christ, who are unfaithful, "who draw back unto perdition" (Heb. x. 39). The pestilence of spiritual death has seized upon them, their "faces now wax pale" (Isa. xxix. 22), in "time of temptation they fall away," and Hades, as the hearse, is following to receive them.

These three horses with their riders thus exhibit the experiences of the faithful and unfaithful members of the Church of Christ.

At the breaking of the fifth seal, the souls under the altar which had been "slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held," reveal the hostility and power of the adversaries of Christ ; and by the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" and by the reply that they should "wait yet for a little season," we see the measure of the 1260 days (Rev. xii. 6) in progress towards the crisis of the "great day of wrath" (vi. 17).

At the breaking of the sixth seal the *portents* of this coming day of wrath appear. "There was a great earthquake,"—men's hearts quaking through fear. "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair,"—this an emblem of Christ hiding His face ; "Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled" (Psa. xxx. 7). "The moon became as blood,"—the Church, of which the moon is the type, no longer gives forth the waters of life, but

that which was to be a "savour of life unto life," becomes a "savour of death unto death" (2 Cor. ii. 16). "The third angel poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood" (Rev. xvi. 4). "The stars of heaven fell upon the earth." These indicate the Holy Scripture, the writings of apostles and prophets. Around the informing head of the woman clothed with the sun, the emblem of the Jewish Church, were seen twelve stars (xii. 1), and the informing angels of the seven Churches are stars (i. 20). The time has come when strong delusion prevails, and the only thing believed is a lie. The stars of heaven no longer shine with lustre, but fall from the heaven of their influence, and the Scriptures of God are dethroned before their time.

And now it comes to be shadowed forth in emblem that Christ appears to gather together His elect. And this we deem to be the meaning of "the heavens departing as a scroll when it is rolled up" (vi. 14). The good, the elect, constituting the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, "are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17).

It is now that the great apostasy unfolds itself; when the bowls of wrath are poured out (Rev. xvi. 1-21); when "every mountain and island are moved out of their places" (vi. 14; xvi. 14); when *at length* the overthrow comes, and the cry arises, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (vi. 16).

*Christ on the Cloud with His Holy Ones—The Reapers—
His Sickle.*

We must now return to the outside writing. Previous to this appearance of one like unto the Son of Man, St. John saw an "angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (xiv. 6; Matt. xxiv. 14); and again, "another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen;" and a third angel, saying, "If any worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture" (Rev. xiv. 9, 10).

And now the sickle is thrust in, and the earth is reaped.

The tares have *first* been cut down and *bound up* in bundles for the burning (Matt. xiii. 30). (*Babylon is fallen.*) Then the wheat is gathered into the garner,—the heaven is rolled up like a scroll.

The Apostasy—The Outpouring of the Seven Bowls of Wrath.

And now we have to distinguish between this harvest of the earth and the vintage which follows, which vintage is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

There is to be noticed here an interval of time. The vintage, when the grapes become *fully* ripe, is at a later season than the reaping of the harvest. And this interval of time is discernible in the respective periods given for the duration of the Church, and that for the continuance of the beast. For the Church it is 1260 days in the wilderness (Rev. xii. 6), whereas power was given unto the beast to continue forty-two months (xiii. 5). This period is three years and six months, and this is equivalent to $1277\frac{1}{2}$ days, thus showing a symbol of $17\frac{1}{2}$ days, during which the great apostasy is to reveal itself.

And it is upon this apostasy that the seven angels are now sent with their bowls or vials of wrath to pour out upon *the earth*, and upon the *seat* of the beast; and all these blasphemers, though suffering under judgments, “repented not to give glory to God” (xvi. 9).

What is specially to be noticed here is that these three *blaspheming* powers surviving on the earth, under the emblems of “the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet” (Babylon, the emblem of the *licentious*, has fallen, and is held over for judgment; and the elect have been translated to heaven), are permitted to penetrate the nations beyond the apocalyptic boundary of the great Euphrates—all those nations in the East who have never embraced the gospel, as in India and China—and to draw them to unite in opposition against God. These are typified by the ten horns of the beast. He came up out of the sea, and they are the sea, isles of the sea. They are thus part of his growth, but as yet they are but as horns, insensible, irresponsible peoples, so far as their connection with the kingdom of Christ is concerned. But now that these three evil influences, which, like frogs, have leapt from the mountain into the sea, they are permitted to “receive power as

kings one hour with the beast" (xvii. 12). Now it comes to pass, that when the bowl is poured out upon the great river Euphrates, that the water is dried up, "that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared" (xvi. 12).

The world struggle at the end of this age then takes place. This must be a great spiritual conflict, in which all the powers, whether surviving upon earth or not, take part. It is the blaspheming beast whose seven heads are seven mountains, which had, when first seen, the name of blasphemy upon his heads, which has now become *full* of the names of blasphemy (xiii. 1; xvii. 3), together with the false prophet, the antichrist, and their animating spirit the dragon; aided by the *isles of the sea*, the ten kings from the East, who are then gathered together "to the battle of the great day of God Almighty." And this conflict is called Harmagedon (xvi. 14).

That the overthrow of those who represented in chief the persecutors of Israel, should, in *apocalyptic imagery*, be set forth as taking place on the plain of Magedo, the locality where good King Josiah, a type of Christ, had been overthrown, is most suitable; and the prefix of *Har*, a mountain, indicates who it is that is there overthrown. "Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (xvi. 18), being "melted with blood" (Isa. xxxiv. 3).

The triumph consequent upon this conflict is now visible, when the Word of God is seen in the heavens on a shining white horse, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and the "armies in heaven following upon shining white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (xix. 13, 14).

And now those who had been conquered are brought forward to receive their sentence. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the *earth*" (these are not the kings of the East, but reveal the false prophet) "which *had* been gathered together" (*συνηγμένα*, this may be translated as pluperfect). "These two" (ideal representatives of many) "were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (xix. 20)—the abyss into which also Satan is cast bound (xx. 3).

The Great Babylon—οἱ λοιποὶ—the rest.

But "the rest were killed with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, (even the sword) which came forth out of His

mouth" (xix. 21). "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

Here is the *judgment* upon Babylon which has fallen (Rev. xiv. 8) and has been held over, *bound* up like the tares for the burning. And now it is that "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath" (xvi. 19).

This Babylon was seen in vision as the woman seated on the beast (xvii. 3). She has the human form, unlike the beast, but she has become drunk with the wine of her fornication. She sits upon the beast, and is so identified with him; but she is separate. She is the emblem of what is licentious amongst men, whereas the beast is full of names of blasphemy. There are no names of blasphemy upon her, therefore her punishment is to be different: she is sent, not into the lake of fire burning with *brimstone*, which indicates that those going to that abyss cannot open their eyes to see the truth, or breathe out supplications for mercy in that choking atmosphere, but the woman goes to Hades, to be burnt down in the fire of God's displeasure. It has been told us that the wicked shall be turned into Hades, and all the people that forget God (Psa. ix. 17); but if so, "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, saving the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," which "shall not be forgiven in this age, neither in the age to come" (Matt. xii. 31, 32).

The woman is now to be sent to punishment, and she shall be utterly burned with fire (Rev. xviii. 8). The devouring flame of God's anger shall purge her from all impurity; and everything which engrossed and defiled and constituted her as Babylon in contradistinction to the Jerusalem of God, is now as a great millstone cast into the sea. "Thus with violence" (here is the baptism of fire in contrast with that of the Spirit) "shall that great city of Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (xviii. 21). She who entered Hades (vi. 8) as the daughter of Babylon, now being purified from all evil, the spirit of grace and supplication having been poured out, is now cleansed and brought forth from her purgation of the thousand years; and she who thus passes through her purgation is spoken of as "the rest of the dead." The "rest of the dead" lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished; *οἱ λοιποὶ*, "the rest were killed

with the sword" (xix. 21); *οἱ λοιποὶ*, "the rest lived not again until" (xx. 5).

"How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers" (Isa. i. 21); therefore "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin" (ver. 25), and "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment" (ver. 27).

It is done (γέγονε).

It is now that the end of this age has come, the γέγονε has been spoken. "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done" (xvi. 17). This age is now over.

SECTION IV.

THE AGE TO COME.

Its Thousand Years of Retribution and its Little Season of Probation (xx. 3).

THE half-hour's silence which is mentioned in the inside writing of the roll has now commenced. The fitness of the expression "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour," as marking the period of the thousand prophetic years, may be seen if we bear in mind that the whole of the apocalyptic vision, from Christ's appearance to St. John, giving directions what to write to the seven Churches, and then unfolding the mystery of God, from the birth of Christ in the flesh to the restitution of all things, was made within the compass of one day, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (i. 10). It was thus within the limits of a few hours that the whole revelation was unfolded, and the silence about the space of half an hour thus becomes an appropriate emblem of the pause mentioned in the outside writing of the roll as a thousand years.

And in reflecting upon these thousand years, we would

ask, What period of time may this signify? Are we to take the number spoken of in its literal sense, or see in it an emblem shadowing forth some period which reaches far beyond our feeble imaginings? The times and seasons God hath put in His own power, and it is not for us to know them. Why, then, let us humbly ask, are these figures, marking periods of time, given us? May it not be that we are thereby led to see the vastness of the future by its contrast with the present? Thus, in regard to the present, the time during which the Church is to suffer in the wilderness, is given under the signature of 1260 days. Now, the Church's wilderness experience has already extended to 1850 years, and how much longer that experience will be we know not. If, then, 1260 days is a period not filled up by 1850 years, by the same analogous process of calculation what must be the period signified by the thousand years—365,000 days. When we step out of this scene of earth, where in mercy our probationary state is limited to three-score years and ten, and pass to the retributive experiences, then we shall discover that we are truly being dealt with by Him with whom "a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years."

This reflection on the thousand years enables us to understand what is meant by the "little season" (xx. 3), which little season appears to correspond in length of time with the whole period of this our probationary age.

But what are the experiences to be of those who are to people the earth during this season of refreshment? That the nations are to exist upon this globe during these thousand prophetic years is most evident, because Satan goes out at the expiration of the thousand years to deceive them (xx. 7).

The thought will occur, has not the earth been reaped? have not the good been gathered into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, where they shall ever be with the Lord? Has not the great Babylon been sent to Hades, whence those confined shall not come forth until the thousand years are finished? (xx. 5). Have not the beast and the false prophet been cast into the lake of fire, there to be under punishment with Satan bound (v. 20)?

All this is so stated. But what in regard to the nations, the ten kings of the East, who came to give their power as kings one hour with the beast (xvii. 13)? These were present

at Harmagedon, and helped to "make war with the Lamb," but the Lamb overcame them, and scattered their force (xvii. 14). These had come across the apocalyptic boundary, the great river Euphrates, dividing the emblems of earth from sea; these had come from the sea of nations; and now that they are overcome, it is said "the islands fled away" (xvi. 20). They are not swallowed up in the great earthquake, when "the mountains were not found" (xvi. 20). These ten kings of the East are revealed as the ten horns of the beast (xvii. 12).

Now that they have given their power for "one hour with the beast," and have been conquered and have fled, a changed mind comes over them. They not only survive on this stage of earth, but they become pure in mind and heart, fitted to live under the new condition of things now about to prevail, when Satan is bound and all temptation is restrained.

And this their existence on the earth, and their blessed condition, appears to be revealed under the statement, "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (xvii. 16). Such now to people the world shall thus become hostile in memory to all evil, and their lives shall be such as is consistent with God's presence in Paradise.

We are now led to believe that Paradise is to be restored to the earth, and that what God's Scripture has already taught us in the early chapters of Genesis, is about to be repeated. In the beginning we read of the waters covering the globe, and that the dry land was caused to appear. "And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He seas." So now in this sea of nations, which survives, we see again the waters covering the globe; and it is from out of them that the dry land—the fruit-bearing earth, an enclosed garden of Paradise—is made to appear; and man again, as the Adam in covenant relationship with the Lord, admitted to hear the voice of the Lord God talking with him, upon whom the Lord imposes the duty of spiritual husbandry, for he is to dress and to keep the garden. This was visible in the first Paradise; for the Lord God, when He breathed into the Adam the breath of life and made him in the highest spiritual sense a living soul, gave him "to have dominion over everything" in sea and earth (Gen. i. 26). And when the Lord

God brought the beast of the field and the fowl, the lower orders of social life, to Adam to name them, he called them "living souls" (Septuagint ; ii. 19).

The Adam as *anthropos*, man, was thus raised in the scale of social being, and he had under his care those which were to be a help meet for him (ii. 18), over whom God gave dominion (i. 26).

Now, we learn, when the season of refreshment comes, that the same gradations in the social life shall exist, and all are united in a blessed harmony. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." "The lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den."

Mankind, as the Adam, are here visible, for we see their offspring ; likewise those gradations of existence typified by the wild beast, and the cattle ; but all, while in Paradise, are instinct with the knowledge of God, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 6-9), in measure, doubtless, existing according to their relative capacity for receiving that knowledge. .

Satan loosed.

This loosing of Satan is thus stated in the outside writing : "And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." This marks the beginning of the probationary period of the age to come ; what follows here appears to reveal the great conflict at the close of it (Rev. xx. 8-15). The shadowing forth by emblems, of that which intervenes, to us appears to be revealed under the seven trumpets (viii.-xi.). After the silence in heaven "there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake," ere the seven angels prepared to sound (viii. 5). The revelation of what is to happen in this age was thus likewise preceded, for then "there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (xi. 19).

And observe here the force of the article, *the* seven angels who are about to sound the trumpets. They must have been under previous notice in the natural order of development ; and this is really so, for they, as "seven angels," *first* appeared at the close of this age, with the seven bowls of wrath (xv.

1, 7). And now, after the half-hour's silence, they, "*the* seven angels," again appear with the far-reaching sound of the trumpet by which the judgment power penetrating through the whole of this age to come is to be revealed (viii. 2).

And now it will be seen that there is on the earth a covenant people of God—an Adam, who has been cast out of Paradise with a line of Seth, sons of God—an *earth* with covenant man (*anthropos*) upon it. There is likewise a *sea* of nations in an uncovenanted state. Throughout the whole of this book the fruit-bearing earth has this signification; likewise man, the *anthropos*, is he who has been in covenant relationship "to till" that earth, and either carries the seal of God, or has received the mark of the beast. The sea are the unfruitful nations.

The Trumpets.

The first trumpet note is followed with judgments upon the earth, the second upon the sea.

First Trumpet.

The first trumpet is followed by a Heaven-sent judgment upon the earth: the times of refreshing have passed away, and temptation working evil is again powerful in the world. We seem to hear, as of old, the cry laden with judgment to come, "My Spirit shall not always strive with men;" and in due time forth comes from heaven, not a flood of waters as before, but "hail and fire mingled with blood," to the burning down of one-third part of the trees and all the green fresh grass (viii. 7).

Second Trumpet.

Under the sixth trumpet, we see the Mighty Angel clothed with a cloud and a rainbow upon His head, placing His right foot upon the sea and His left foot upon the earth, declaring that there should be no more delay (Rev. x. 6), and that the little book (the gospel) must be eaten up. "And He said unto me, Thou must prophesy *again* before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (x. 11).

Here is the preaching again of the gospel, and that to these nations represented by the sea, on which the Mighty Angel, Christ, now places His right foot. But ere this take place, it is to be expected that the law, which is the school-

master to bring men to Christ, should be made known. And to our mind this is what is shadowed forth by the mountain being cast into the sea. The ten tribes of Israel, so long lost to the knowledge even of their own identity, are now brought into conscious relationship with God. The chosen nation is now gathered together, and the presence of the Lord with them is manifest. The mountain burns with fire, and by this God's judgment power is revealed. The mountain is cast into the sea of nations, in which its fire cannot be quenched, but which has power over the waters and turns a third part of the sea into blood. "The law worketh wrath" (Rom. iv. 15).

Third Trumpet.

The third trumpet brings again a woe upon the *earth*, the streams of grace become wormwood, and many *men* died of the waters because they were made bitter; they became a savour of death unto death.

Fourth Trumpet.

The fourth angel sounds, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars become darkened. This is again a judgment upon the covenant *men* upon the earth, because these spiritual lights in the heaven are set there to give light upon *the earth* (Gen. i. 17).

The Locust Plague—Fifth Trumpet.

The fifth angel now sounds, and the scourge comes from beneath upon the covenant men on the earth.

These locusts come out of the abyss. The carcase of the beast was cast into the abyss at the end of this age; and now in the age to come the locust swarm comes forth from this carcase to torment "those *men* who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads" (Rev. ix. 4).

And mark their description. We should here take the composite figure of the horse and his rider as the true type of humanity, and bring these locusts into contrast. "The shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle." Here is the animal nature of man, filled with strength and fierceness; but where is the guiding hand? where the rider seated in majesty? All that is created in the Divine image,

the wondrous form and beauty of the rider, are not there, but are *sunk* altogether into the animal. *Their* faces were as the faces of men, and they had hair as the hair of women. Their hearts too have become steeled: "They had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron."

The daughter of Babylon, when she comes forth from her punishment of the thousand years in Hades, shall be as the daughter of Zion, purified from all corruption; but there is to be no forgiveness in this age to come for these blasphemers cast into the abyss, therefore we see them arise as monsters.

In the⁴ prophetic language, these are to continue "five months," during which they have power to do hurt (ix. 10).

We should note the fact that under the next trumpet the gospel is to be preached. We know from sacred history how the demon world was set free to torment men, during the time of Christ's ministry and His immediate followers. These manifestations are rarely if ever seen by us. The statement here made that they were to continue the limited period of the five prophetic months, enables us to understand why these possessions of men by demons is not so conspicuous now as appears to have been the case in the time of our Lord's appearance upon earth.

This locust plague fades from the vision. When we remember how Jesus exorcised the legion of demons and they "entered into the herd of swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked" (Luke viii. 33), we are thus enabled to understand how, after a limited period, they cease to torment men.

Sixth Trumpet.

And now the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates are loosed. These four angels, who could not pass over (except for the one hour, xvii. 12) the apocalyptic river—the great Euphrates, which has separated hitherto the covenant people of God, from the uncovenanted nations—are now loosed. This appears to signify that they represent all the nations from the four quarters of the globe, now to be brought into covenant, to come up on to the earth that they may "stand before the Lord of the *earth*" (xi. 4). They are called angels, as being sent by God, who are to become His instruments of punishment upon the *men* on the covenant

earth, to slay the third part of men (Rev. ix. 15) on whom darkness has settled to the extent of one third part (viii. 12).

And these four angels are now seen as a multitude of *horsemen*, even "two hundred thousand thousand" (ix. 16).

"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions," etc. These are horsemen. The rider, though seen, is not described; but it is the horse, the fierce barbaric animal nature of men in an unconverted state, which is prominent. And now light shines upon the vision from God by the mouth of Isaiah: "And He will lift up an ensign to the *nations*, which are *far off*, and will hiss unto them from the *end of the earth*: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly: none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind: their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it. And in that day they shall roar against them like *the roaring of the sea*; and if one look unto the *earth*, *behold darkness* and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof" (Isa. v. 26-30).

When the "day, month, and year" have expired, during which they are "to slay the third part of men" (Rev. ix. 15), then these, who have crossed Euphrates to the territory of the covenant earth, are to have the gospel preached to them.

Christ, the Mighty Angel, clothed with a cloud—the symbol of the Holy Spirit—out of which rains the grace of God, descends upon the earth, and is now seen come down from heaven. "And He cried with a loud voice . . . : and when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices" (x. 3). The Mighty Angel then puts His right foot upon the sea, and His left upon the earth; declares there shall be no more delay; and gives the little book—now *open*—to St. John; and bids His disciple prophesy *again* before many peoples, nations, and tongues (x. 11).

As the book is now open to these Gentile nations that it may be understood, and as many are now to be gathered in for God,

the heavenly, the spiritual temple is to be measured off, and is to be succeeded by the ampler all-embracing structure of the holy city. It is now that the New Jerusalem begins to rise. Henceforward in the unfoldings the temple is no more mentioned, except to denote its absence. ("I saw no temple therein," xxi. 22). The spiritual stones of this temple have now become as material in the wall of jasper around the golden city (p. 20).

The Church of those converted out of these nations is now distinctly spoken of as the Church of "My witnesses," which is seen side by side with the elder Church of "men" (*anthropoi*).

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore (1260) days, clothed in sackcloth" (xi. 3). In this our age the Church is described as the woman fleeing into the wilderness for 1260 days (xii. 6, 14). In this age to come the apparently equivalent expression, marking this Church's suffering condition, is that of being "clothed in sackcloth." The persecuting beast in this our age is to continue forty-two months (xiii. 5), so in this age to come the holy city is to be trodden under foot forty-two months (xi. 2).

The two witnesses are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth, *i.e.* in covenant relation (xi. 4). They are the law and the gospel dispensations, the Church being built up upon prophets and apostles. The olive-trees, from which the oil for the candlestick is obtained, indicate the enlightening Spirit of God; the candlesticks, the Church, so far as it is built up by human agency: God works in man, to will and to do.

It is out of the mouths of these witnesses that fire proceeds to the devouring of their enemies. "Is not thy word like a fire?" So long as they are *alive*—that is, *living witnesses* for God—they have power to bless and to curse (John xx. 23), and this because, being *living* witnesses, they prophesy the true *word*, and it is the word which judgeth: "The word which I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

But this Church of the two witnesses is not always a living Church, for there comes a time when they shall have finished their testimony, when they shall cease to prophesy truth, being

overcome by the beast (xi. 7), who thus again appears in vision as an enemy of all righteousness, having ascended out of the abyss (xi. 7 ; ix. 3 ; xvii. 8). Evils have crept in to corrupt. And the nature of these corrupting influences by which the life of God has departed from the witnesses is indicated, for "their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the *great* city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt" (xi. 8). Sensuality and idolatry, typified by these two cities, which were their besetting sins, are thus seen to be the corrupting influences which have slain these faithful ones. The expression "where also our Lord was crucified," indicates that there are to be some blasphemers found amongst them.

The significance of their "dead bodies" lying in the streets, and the people, and kindred, and tongues and nations not suffering the dead bodies being put into graves, seems to reveal that the forms of worship are insisted upon for being preserved, although the soul has gone out of them.

Those of the Church, of men dwelling on earth, "shall rejoice over them, the Church of the witnesses, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another: because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth" (xi. 10). The rivalries and animosities existing between different bodies of professing Christians appear to be thus set forth, and to be a state of things ever prevailing as part of our probationary experience.

But after three prophetic days and a half, "the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud" (xi. 11, 12).

This appears to be the gathering together of the elect in this age to come. There now follows a great earthquake, and an overthrow. The tenth part of this Sodom and Egyptian city—this city of the witnesses—fell, and of the Church of men, of such as had names of men, *ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων*, seven thousand were slain. This great earthquake appears to be the overthrow of the blaspheming forces in this age to come, answering to the Harmagedon at the end of this age, and is unfolded to us at chap. xx. 8, 9, in the outside writing: "And Satan shall go out to deceive the nations,

which are in the four quarters of the earth (ix. 14), Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the *sand of the sea*. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (we should not think of any local struggle upon any one spot of the earth's surface, but of a great conflict between the spirits of good and evil): "and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Here again appear "the rest," *οἱ λοιποὶ*, as distinguished from the saints caught up to heaven, and the blasphemers, who are overthrown in this shock of the great earthquake. In the former vision (xix. 21) at the end of this age, the rest or remnant were slain by the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which proceeded out of His mouth, *i.e.* by His word they were tried, condemned, and punished in Hades (vi. 8; Isa. xiv. 9), where they were sent, and they are the "rest of the dead who lived not again until the thousand years had expired" (xx. 5) but then they came forth purified. This was the result of their punishment. So now "the rest were *affrighted*, and *gave glory* to the God of heaven" (Rev. xi. 13). That such must first pass through a purgation we gather from the great harmony which appears in the general experience of the age to come as contrasted with that revealed in regard to this age. The time allotted for this purgation is lost to us in the infinite distance. We must judge by the result obtained—their giving glory—and by the analogy of the thousand years which have hitherto been spoken of in regard to the great Babylon. So, now, in regard to the great city which "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt."

"The second woe is passed; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (xi. 14).

Three woes were thus proclaimed at (viii. 13): "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

When the fifth angel sounded, there came the locusts. When the sixth angel sounded, there came the plague of horsemen—and in due time the *overthrow* of the tenth part of the city, together with 7000 names of men—as also the affrighting by which the rest are to be brought to give glory. When the seventh trumpet sounds, the time has come that "thou

shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (xi. 18). And now those who were overthrown—who fell in the great earthquake, the tenth part of the city, and the seven thousand names of men which were slain, have their punishment assigned in the abyss. They are they on whom Satan, who has gone out to deceive the nations, and "the beast which ascendeth out of the abyss" (xi. 7), together with the false prophet, have exercised their *blaspheming* influence. They are in the concrete of the beast, being "the eighth, and is of the seven" (xvii. 11). This third woe is now accomplished.

Seventh Trumpet.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also (καὶ) the beast and the false prophet (are cast), and they shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages" (xx. 10). The γέγονε, "It is done," is again spoken at the end of this age to come" (xvi. 17, xxi. 6).

SECTION V.

NEW JERUSALEM AGE.

AND now follows the great judgment—when Christ is seated on "the great white throne," the "throne of His glory." The time has come "to give reward unto His servants, the prophets and saints" (xi. 18); and all of them, those who have died in the Lord (Rev. xiv. 13), or who have been caught up into the clouds, are now surrounding the throne of glory. And Christ who, at the end of this age appears with ten thousands of His holy ones (Jude 14), is now seen with all His holy angels (Matt. xxv. 31)—with the angels, *the holy ones*, or saints (Mark viii. 38).

And it is now that the books are opened and the *dead* are judged. The faithful in Christ Jesus are not amongst the dead, "Whoso liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Such have "passed from the death unto the life" (John v. 24); they are blessed from henceforth (Rev. xiv. 13).

Who, then, are the dead—these nations gathered before the throne of the glory of the Son of man—of which there will be a separation, as of sheep from goats? The answer appears to be given: “The sea gave up the dead which were in it” (xx. 13), all the nations who have never been in covenant with the Lord, whose only light has been that of conscience, and who have been able thus to show their faithfulness or wilful disobedience, are they, who are judged according to their works. These, we are led to believe, in whatever age of the world they have lived, have gone down into silence, into Nirvana, and sleep unconsciously in the dust of the earth (Dan. xii. 2) until the “last trump” calls them to judgment. The long delay of their awaking consciousness has not effaced from them the memory of their life on earth, but as the Judge opens the book of His remembrance, all in their past life becomes clear. Such have been “drowned in the depths of the sea;” they have never been spiritually born—born *ἄνωθεν*, from above. And it shall be more tolerable, in consequence, for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for Capernaum. And it had been better for Judas had he been thus as one of the dead in the deep sea of the uncovenanted nations, than to have been born of the Spirit from above, only that he might do despite to the Spirit of the living God. These are not as the Adam into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, so that from being *ψυχικός* he became *πνευματικός*; from being fleshly minded he became spiritually minded, a new creature (1 Cor. xv. 46).

But “Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them.” Our thoughts are now upon the vision of the opening of the fourth seal. “I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hades” (as the hearse to receive the dead) “followed with him” (Rev. vi. 8). Here are they who have been followers of Christ, men in covenant with Him; but they are those who draw back unto perdition—*εἰς ἀπώλειαν* (Heb. x. 39); who pass through the broad gate that leadeth to the perdition—*εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν* (Matt. vii. 13), to the loss of blessing and to punishment (Matt. xvi. 26).

Hades, as contrasted with the Abyss, or lake of fire, is the prison of all those who not having blasphemed have yet lived wickedly. Those in covenant with the Lord before the flood,

such as were *disobedient*, resisting the strivings of God's Spirit, are found there in prison (1 Pet. iii. 19). In the days of Israel, Korah and all his company went down into Hades (Septuagint, Num. xvi. 33). As time goes on, Hades enlarges herself, and opens her mouth without measure, and "*My people* are gone into captivity" (Isa. v. 13, 14). And then when the proverb is taken up against the King of Babylon, we may see, in the prophetic vision, the *great* Babylon of the Apocalypse descending, when "Hades from beneath is moved for to meet thee at thy coming" (Isa. xiv. 9).

When the *great* Babylon is brought into remembrance (Rev. xvi. 19) to receive her award of punishment at the end of this age, the command was, "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. *How much* she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, *so much* torment and sorrow give her. . . . And she shall be burned down in the fire" (xviii. 6-8). "In Hades Dives lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

These appear, as we have observed (page 36), to be the "rest of the dead," as distinguished from those sent to the abyss at the end of this age; they are they who live again after the expiration of the thousand years (xx. 5). Of them it may truly be said that they have been baptized with fire (Matt. iii. 11); "that they have been delivered unto Satan for the destruction (*εἰς ὀλεθρον*) of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor. v. 5).

Again, in the age to come, when Satan deceives, Death and Hades are still as followers to harass the army of Christ (vi. 8). Death is the spiritual pestilence that settles upon the unfaithful—those who do not overcome; and Hades is the prison to receive them. Those, then, descending into Hades are thus among the dead to God. The nations are dead in sleep, but these are dead in trespasses and sins. And these are now called to judgment, and "Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them" (Rev. xx. 13). And their punishment is to be endured in the common receptacle of the "lake of fire." But the brimstone, which blinds and chokes and prevents the spirit of supplication taking possession of the heart, is not here mentioned in regard to the punishment of those prisoners of Hades. "Death and Hades were cast

into the lake of fire" (xx. 14). And by the analogy of God's dealings with those of this age who live again after their thousand years of punishment, so now these of Hades, in the age to come, after having endured their "so much" in proportion to their "how much" (xviii. 7), now come to repentance and live again. And this we are led to believe is the unfolding of the statement in the inside writing of the roll, "And the rest (*οἱ λοιποὶ*) were *affrighted*, and gave glory to the God of heaven" (xi. 13). (Page 47.)

But Christ has not only the keys of Hades, but of Death ; and this death must here mean the deep abyss, the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And what the significance of these emblems ? Surely the waters of this lake are the emblems used to represent the responsible beings *stagnant* there. The fire is the emblem of God's anger. "Does not My jealousy burn like fire ?" And the brimstone, preventing the eye from opening to see the light, and the spirit from breathing forth its supplicatory prayer, is that which delays their forgiveness. To some men therein—such as are seen under the emblems of the beast and false prophet—to some the word holds good as spoken to the blasphemers in the age to come, "They shall not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." It is in this lake of fire and brimstone that all "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have *their part*." To the uncovenant peoples—the licentious goats—it is "fire" (Matt. xxv. 41) ; but to blasphemers, idolaters who have the mark of the beast (xiii. 15, 16), there is brimstone also for their portion.

We must, however, bear in mind that every spirit shall be judged by the rule of righteousness. Justice awards according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, and "every man shall bear his own burden." And this law of eternal righteousness must apply to all created responsible spirits, whether of men or angels. And seeing that some fallen angels are more wicked than others (Matt. xiii. 45), we can understand how, with them likewise, there are degrees of punishment ; and if there be degrees, there must be abatements ; and we know that when the fullest measure of punishment has been meted out to the arch enemy, that then death itself is destroyed, and all opposition to God is over ; so that

the all-conquering Word of God, to whom all judgment is committed, has not only gone forward conquering and to conquer, not only has put all enemies under His feet, but has destroyed every enemy; the last enemy that is destroyed is death. Henceforward every curse shall be no longer (xxii. 3), and the kingdoms of this world (Satan is the prince of this world, and he rules in the hearts of all the disobedient) shall "become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (xi. 15). And see now the significance of St. Paul's statement, "When all things have been subjected unto Him (*ὑποταγῇ*), then shall the Son also Himself be subjected (*ὑποταγήσεται*) unto Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Herein we see the same relationship of all things to Christ, as exists between Christ and the Father. The same word expresses them both: therefore the indwelling of God the Father is complete, and *death is swallowed up* in victory (ver. 54).

The Seven Thunders.

It is now after the great assize has taken place, and the wicked have been sent into the abyss—the fire prepared for the devil and his angels,—that we may venture to believe the seven thunders are to find their significance. They were awakened by the sound of His voice, who is the "Mighty Angel" (Rev. x. 3). They came forth from Christ's throne (iv. 5). It was when the sixth trumpet was sounded that these thunders were heard; but then those things which the seven thunders uttered were to be sealed up. Nevertheless, the things uttered were heard, and this intimation that they were articulate with "voices" (iv. 5), is a fact to which we are to give heed. We may bear in mind Christ's own promise, "The Comforter shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26). It is not surprising, therefore, if at some time the seal should be broken, and the dark utterances be made clear. "The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii. 3).

The New Jerusalem age of glory, now entered upon, is an age of glory coterminous with the age of punishment; for

"the righteous shall go into age-lasting life (εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον) and the wicked into the *fire*, which is age-lasting (εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

But this one age of punishment is marked by subdivisions of time; for the devil shall be tormented for *ages of ages* (Rev. xx. 10).

And these periods, these ages of ages, which we dare humbly to conceive as periods of release, appear to be marked by the sounding of the seven thunders. The trumpet note has died away, which sound has reached over sea, awakening the dead, and into the chambers of Hades, calling forth the prisoners; but now into the deep "abyss" of spiritual existences comes the mighty vibration of the thunder tones. May not such herald the approach of Him who has the keys of death as well as of Hades (i. 18), to open the prison doors to them that are bound in the lowest deep of the earth, and to let the captives, after they have had their part in the general doom of punishment—their "so much" in proportion to their "how much"—go free?

Thus to every host, as they go forth in their appointed time, to become as the nations which are saved, who are to walk in the light of the New Jerusalem (xxi. 24), this abyss of death has become *apoleia* to them. They have died to sin, they have been committed unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved (ἀπὸ, from ὀλλυμαι, I die,—a death unto sin).

And now we may look to the interpretation of the beast; and the false prophet, who in giving all his power to the beast is identified with the beast. The standpoint of St. John in the vision is after the Harmagedon at the end of this age, when the beast and false prophet, under the emblem of "the mountains," were not found (xvi. 20), for they "both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (xix. 20). The explanation given by the angel was, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not" (he is gone into the abyss); "and shall ascend out of the abyss, and go into *apoleia*" (xvii. 8). And at verse 11, "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into *apoleia*."

This beast, which was seen to arise out of the sea (xiii. 1), which was to continue forty-two months, is the beast that

was ; when cast into the abyss at the end of this age, this is signified by the "is not ;" and when in the age to come the locust swarm comes forth, ascending out of the abyss (ix. 3), we see him deploying his force in that age to come, and again concentrating it for attack on the Church of the saints, when "the beast that ascendeth out of the abyss shall make war against them" (xi. 7). And he who thus appears in the age to come is "the eighth," the one in addition to the seven kings already enumerated as of this age (page 30) ; and "is of the seven ;" and he, the beast, goeth into *apoleia*.

Thus there is an unfolding of hope for all, but under what tremendous conditions to those "who will not that I shall reign over them."

The Water of Life.

But how do the emblems now coming into view deepen that blessed expectation !

Again the throne of God and of the Lamb appears, and forthwith issuing from that throne, the water of Life comes flowing. What a clear revelation is this of the blessed Trinity of the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son !

We see whence this water of life issues ; but whither is it flowing ? When the river went out of Eden to water the garden, "it was parted, and became into four heads" (Gen. ii. 10). Their progress is visible on the surface of the earth, marking the boundaries within which the grace of God was to disclose its fruitfulness, and Euphrates is one of those boundaries (Gen. ii. 14). But now the water of life disappears from view ; yet it is still running. Whither, then, is it penetrating but into the depths of earth's darkness with its life-giving energy ? And what testimony have we in support of this thought ? Mark the unfolding vision.

The Tree of Life.

"And in the midst of the street of it" (the New Jerusalem) "and on either side of the river, the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, and brought forth its fruit every month ; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. xxii. 2).

In the water of life we have the emblem of the Holy Spirit of God ; in the tree of life we have the emblem of Christ.

And what is the work now being carried on by Christ through the life-giving operation of the Holy Spirit? Do not the roots of that tree, reaching underground, through the energizing, life-giving power of that water by which it is planted, assimilate to themselves the properties of the earth, and take them up into their own being? And of that tree is it not said that "its leaves are for the healing of the nations"? And in its harvest of fruitfulness, "bearing twelve fruits," yielding a crop every month, do we not see the purpose being accomplished of Him who came into the world, not for the purpose of condemning the world, "but that the world through Him might be saved (*ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ*)" (John iii. 17). And thus in due time is realized the vision of anticipation, when "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. v. 13).

The Spirit of God, the lamps of fire, are no longer mingling with the sea of glass (xv. 2), but having accomplished their remedial work, *all things* being made new (xxi. 5), there is now seen outspread before the throne the renovated universe of responsible spirits, clothed upon in glory. "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal" (iv. 5, 6).

SECTION VI.

CONCLUSION.

To the mind of the writer, this book of the Apocalypse appears to be most enlightening and most practical, especially suited to us of our generation. It is now that the faithful are minishing in the land, and strong delusion is prevailing. The Christian's belief in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the Son of God, is fading in the minds of many, whose station,

ability and character is such as to give them great influence in the world. The rising generation is being affected by this ; and though, thank God, there are many humble pure-minded and faithful souls, yet the time seems to be drawing on when the great apostasy shall set in, and the question may be asked, "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"

What, then, makes this book thus enlightening and so practical, but the fact that this book may be so read that we see herein Christ the Sun of righteousness, Who is to give "light unto the earth" and become likewise the "Light of world," shining forth in all His glory? "In the sun hath He set His tabernacle, and He Himself goeth forth as a bridegroom out of His chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run His course. His going forth is from the highest heaven, and His return is to the highest heaven. And there is no one, who shall be hidden from the heat thereof" (Psa. xix. 1-6, Septuagint Version). We see Him as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, from which throne shine forth the emblems of His anger and His love, in the sardius and jasper stones. And it is the blood of that Lamb thus enthroned, in which all the robes of the redeemed have been cleansed ; and it is to Him that all ascribe their salvation.

But if Christ has died—if we behold in Him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world—we are reminded that that Lamb has seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth unto all the earth ; and that He has seven horns, revealing His judgment power (v. 6). And then we see Him to whom all judgment is committed, going forth conquering with a bow in His hand, and returning from the world struggle with many diadems upon His head, and with blood upon His vesture.

Again, at the end of this age, He is seen upon the cloud, with a sickle reaping the harvest of the earth ; and again, gathering the clusters of the bitter vines, casting the grapes into the winepress of the wrath of God—which He Himself treads, whose "feet are like unto burnished brass." But His redeemed ones we see gathered into His kingdom—some as His own chosen, the Bride ; and others, a multitude which no one could number, admitted as guests to the marriage supper.

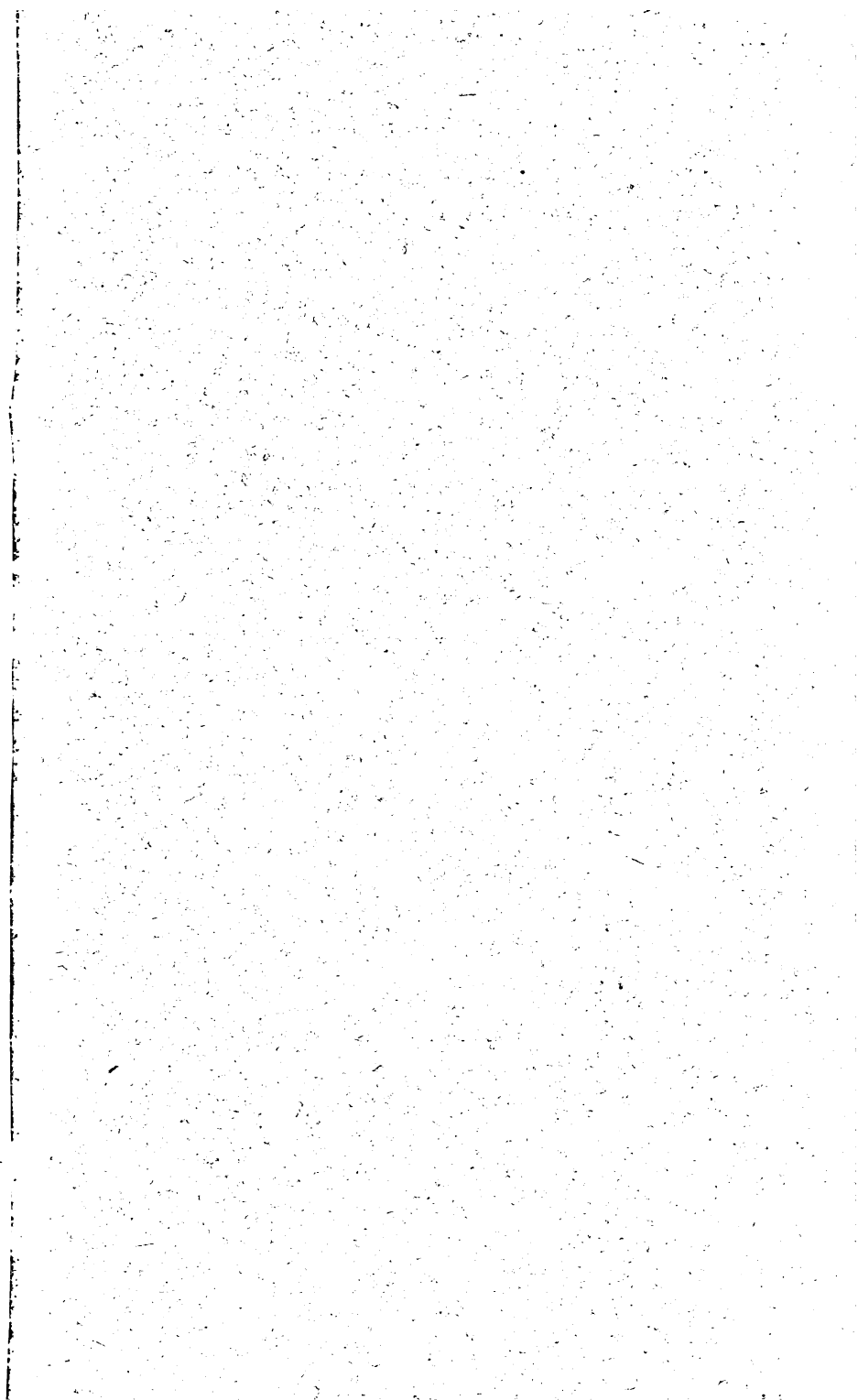
'Again, in the age to come, He is seen as the Mighty Angel

clothed with a cloud, the mantle of the Holy Spirit, declaring that there should be no more delay in preaching the Gospel to the widest limits of the nations, and that the mystery of God should be finished.

Again, at the end of this age to come, His throne of glory—the great white thrones is set, and all the nations—as yet unjudged are assembled before it, to receive their award according as their works have been. Yet, ere the vision close, we see the tree of life in fruitfulness, giving promise to the hope that in due time Christ, to whom all judgment hath been committed, shall perfect His mediatorial work ; and death—the *state* of antagonism to God being abolished—swallowed up in victory, He will then deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all : “That all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us” (John xvii. 21).

How does this full revelation of Christ, as the Son of God redeeming and judging the world, recall to mind all that has in time past been spoken in Holy Scripture, and been believed by the faithful. The primitive truth is again instinct with life ; and the doctrine of a crucified and risen Saviour becomes again our “Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.” This truth is “the bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall live for ever, and the bread which I give is My flesh, which I give for the life of the world.” And so sustaining and so comforting is this blessed truth, that we so feel its power as to be enabled to understand the saying of the apostle, “He that hath the Son hath life ;” and the words of our blessed Lord Himself, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto judgment, but is passed from the death unto the life” (John v. 24).

But if this book be thus enlightening in setting forth so clearly the truth of Christ as the Lamb of God, and the Judge of all the world, how practical likewise does the teaching of this book become ! for herein we see Christ in His glorified body, walking amidst the candlesticks, present among the Churches, speaking as with the voice of a trumpet, bidding us all give heed. That countenance is as the sun shining, His eyes are as a flame of fire, and out of His mouth comes forth that word which is a sharp two-edged sword.



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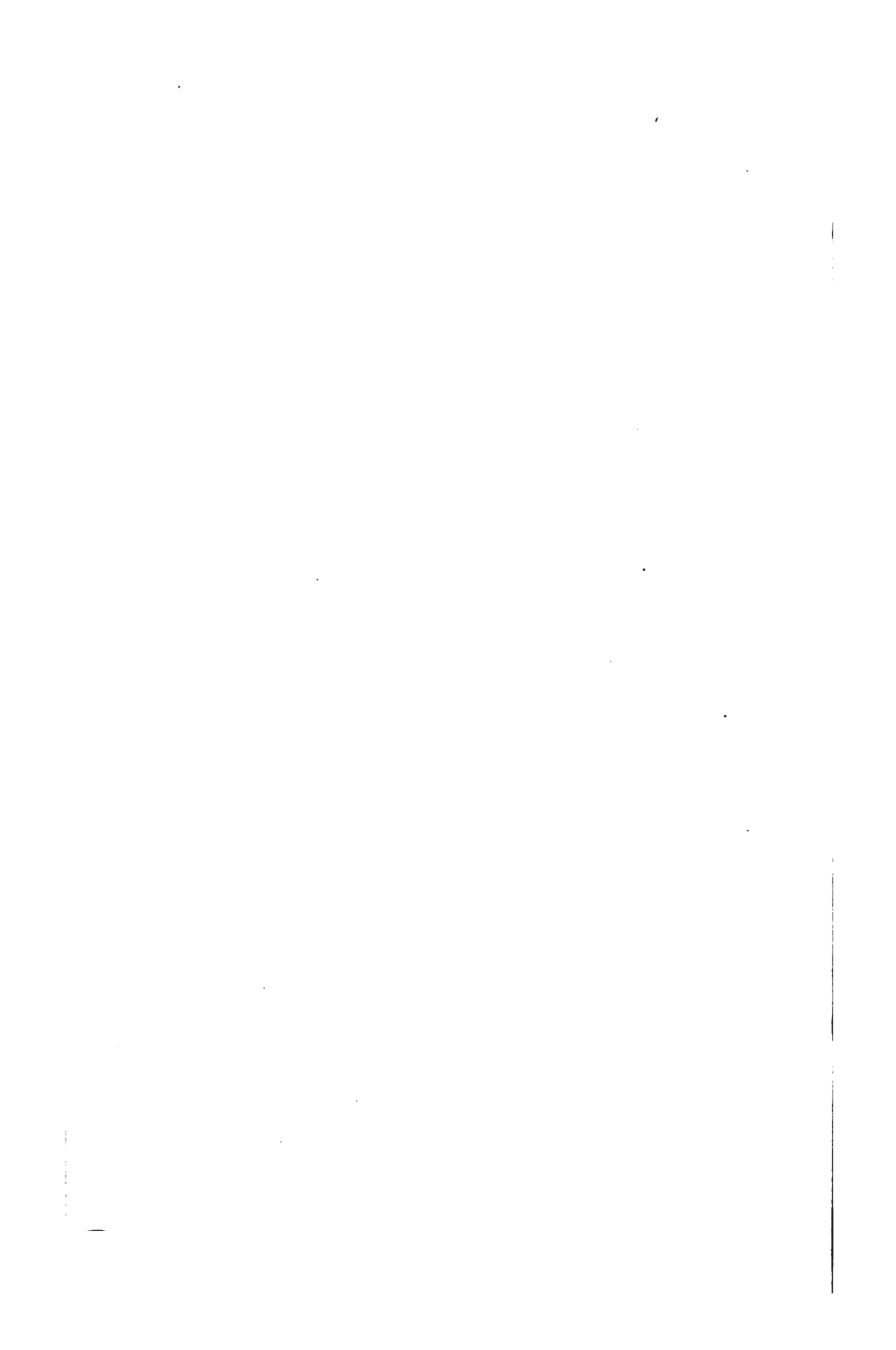
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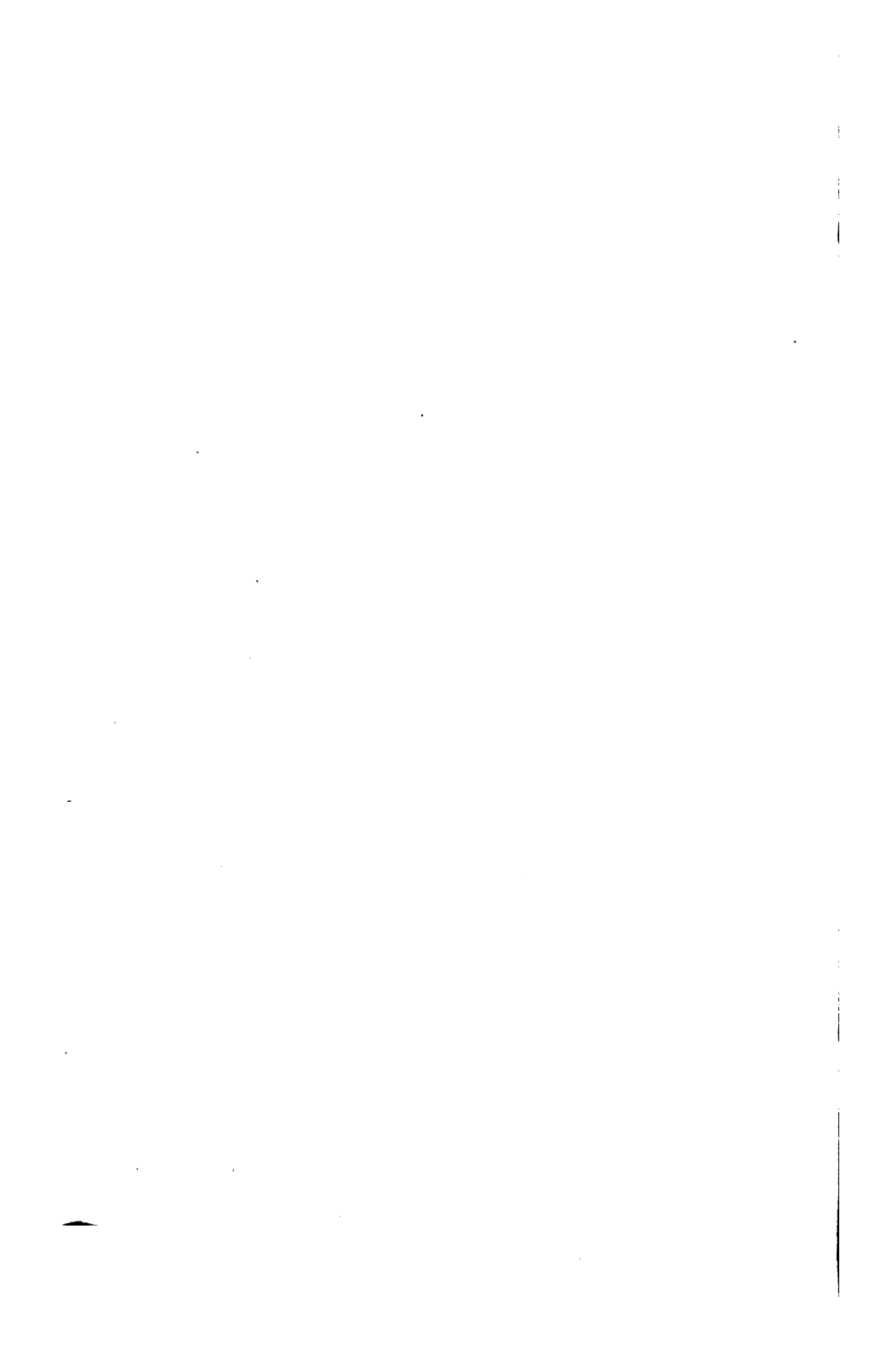
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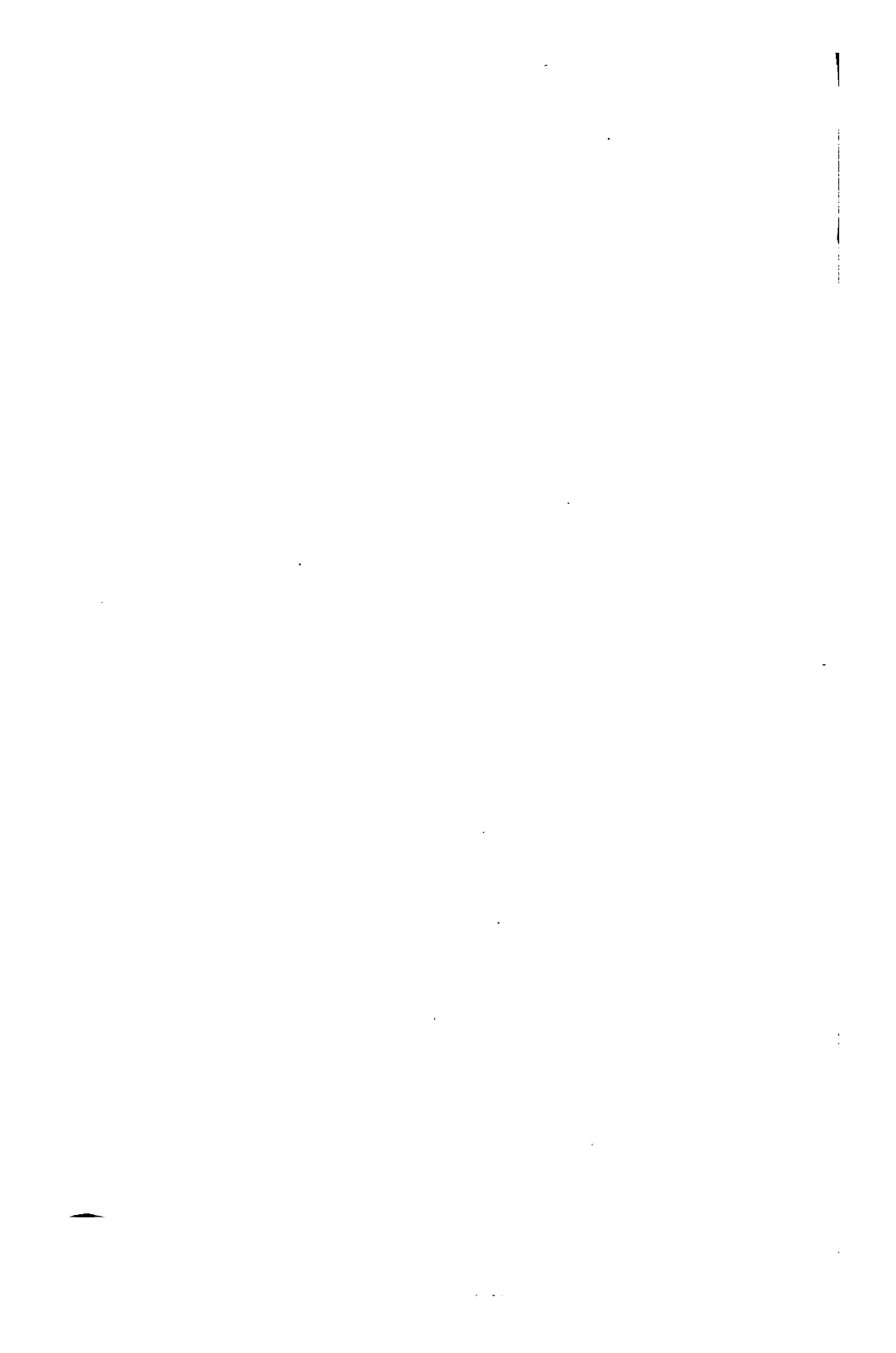
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